

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

**Title: THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY'S
GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME**

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Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to seek endorsement of the CNPA's draft Gender Equality Scheme, including Action Plan (Annex 1).

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

- a) Note the actions required, including impact assessment and monitoring and endorse the CNPA's Gender Equality Scheme.

Executive Summary

Since its inception, the CNPA has been committed to ensuring that its policy is shaped by the views and advice of those groups who face barriers to benefiting from the Park.

Under the requirements of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, as amended by the Equality Act 2006 and further by Order 2007 (the Scottish Order), the CNPA must prepare a Gender Equality Scheme (GES).

THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY'S GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME– FOR DECISION

1. A draft Gender Equality Scheme (GES) has been developed by staff with advice from “Inclusive Cairngorms” (previously the “All Abilities Communication Network”) based on the outcomes of two focus groups (internal and external) made up of male, female and transgender stakeholders. It has been worked on in collaboration with the Highland and Islands Equality Forum and is now at a stage where it is ready to be endorsed by the CNPA Board.
2. It was agreed through the “Developing Equalities Schemes for the CNPA” Board paper (April 2007) that the GES will become part of a single umbrella equality scheme along side the existing Disability Equality Scheme and the Race Equality Scheme (to be completed by 31 October 2007).
3. The draft GES has already been circulated to the Staffing and Recruitment Committee for comment.

Background

4. The Gender Equality Duty (GED) came into force in April 2007 and it requires public authorities to promote gender equality and eliminate sex discrimination.
5. Thirty years after the introduction of the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA), there is still discrimination. Previously organisations would respond to complaints about gender discrimination on an individual basis, with the GES, we the CNPA are required to actively promote a culture of equality. Developing a GES creates the opportunity to bring about real change in the culture of the CNPA as the onus will be on the authority to promote equality, rather than individuals to highlight discrimination.
6. The legislative framework behind the development of a Gender Equalities Scheme includes The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA), The Equal Pay Act 1970, The Equality Act 2006 and the Order 2007 (Scottish Order). This legislation places new duties on the CNPA as a public authority, to demonstrate that it will treat men and women fairly. The duty will affect policymaking, public services and employment practices.
7. Under this legislation in regards to gender, the CNPA has a **general** duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, and harassment and promote equality of opportunity between men and women. The CNPA also has **specific** duties to consult on, assess and monitor policies, practices and procedures, and to publish the results in a Gender Equality Scheme, and to train staff in the duties.

Endorsing the CNPA's Gender Equality Scheme

8. The **general statutory duty** of the CNPA in regards to ensuring gender comes in three parts that need to be considered and addressed.
9. The **specific duties** set out the requirements for public authorities to meet the general duty, including a duty to:
 - a) Gather information
 - b) Consult employees and Park users on how CNPA policies, practices and procedures affect women and men
 - c) Assess the impact of CNPA policies and practice on women and men
 - d) Identify priorities and objectives
 - e) Prepare and implement Action Plan
 - f) Publish the results in a Gender Equality Scheme, report annually and review every three years

There is a further duty to publish an equal pay statement, but as this only applies to authorities employing more than 150 staff. CNPA is therefore exempt from this duty, but as good practice and because it is likely to be a requirement from Scottish Executive we will conduct an equal pay audit by the end of this year.

10. In preparing the draft GES, the CNPA has considered these specific duties. A sub committee was established from the "Inclusive Cairngorms" Group, made up of CNPA staff and gender interest groups. Highlands and Islands Equalities Forum have acted as a facilitator in consulting both internally (with CNPA staff) and externally with user groups, and partners.
11. These consultations gathered detailed information on gender issues:
 - a) To examine whether men, women and transgender people have different experiences in their working life within the CNPA, e.g. in accessing jobs, personal development and training, pay and benefits.
 - b) To examine whether men, women and transgender people have different experiences in accessing Cairngorms National Park services, e.g. housing, transport, recreational facilities, access to paths, tourist facilities and Park information.
12. Feedback from these consultations has formed a foundation for the draft GES and Action Plan. In order to fulfil the time requirements CNPA officers (in collaboration with the Highlands and Islands Equality Forum and Inclusive Cairngorms) developed and published a draft Gender Equality Scheme in June 2007

Recommendation

13. **That the Board note the actions required in Annex 1, including impact assessment and monitoring of the Scheme, (that will be reported back through the annual "Park for All" Board update paper) and endorse the CNPA Gender Equality Scheme.**

Policy Context

14. Relationship with the National Park Plan 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.
15. The guiding principles that set out how the CNPA and its Partners should address inequality within the Park Plan are:
 - a) **“Social Justice - a 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 amongst others: male, female and transgender people.
 - b) **“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. This includes amongst others: male, female and transgender people.
 - c) **“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.

National Policy

16. The new Scottish Parliament administration (SNP 2007 manifesto) shows a commitment to pledging to “pull together the different strands of equality legislation under our control to deliver an integrated equality strategy based on the recognition that discrimination harms people and communities, undermines our economic competitiveness and damages our international reputation.”

Delivering Sustainability

17. Developing a Gender Equality Scheme 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

18. Producing Equalities 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.

Financial Implications

19. Developing, implementing and reviewing Equalities Schemes will take time, resources and commitment from the CNPA and its key partners (particularly Inclusive Cairngorms) Currently there are not the internal resources to cover all this work and the Highland and Islands Equality Forum have been contracted to undertake the additional support and consultation work required.

Presentational Implications

20. Developing a Gender Equality Scheme ensures that the CNPA meets its statutory duties in regards to gender. 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

21. Producing a Gender Equality Scheme is a statutory requirement for all public authorities. This will ensure a uniform approach and a heightened priority on gender equality issues not only for the CNPA but for many of its key partners, both users of the Park and service providers.
22. The Gender Equality scheme 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 men, women and transgender people.

Next Steps

23. Impact assessment, monitoring and evaluation of the gender scheme are vital to its success. Reporting on the scheme, along with the other Equalities Schemes, will happen on an annual basis as a core section in the "Park for All" update paper.

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