

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: Corporate Plan Update: Theme 5

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Purpose

To inform the Board of our work to date to achieve the fifth strategic theme of the Corporate Plan for 2005-08, and our plans for future activity.

Recommendations

- a) That the Board note the progress and plan for achieving the fifth theme of the Corporate Plan for 2005-08.

Executive Summary

The Board agreed the Authority's Corporate Plan for 2005 to 2008 at its February 2005 meeting. The Corporate Plan was framed around 5 themes, setting the overarching framework for the Authority's plans over the next three years. The fifth of those themes is:

“to be an open, innovative and professional organisation that engages effectively with the public and behaves with integrity”.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a fifth update on progress made and plans in place to deliver this strategic theme of the Corporate Plan. This paper seeks to complement the more detailed papers providing regular quarterly updates on delivery of the 20 goals set out in the Corporate Plan through actions and tasks developed in the operational plan, by providing an overview of activity within this general theme.

CORPORATE PLAN UPDATE: THEME 5 – FOR INFORMATION

Background

1. The Board considered a paper in March 2005 which gave the first in this series of updates on delivery of the Corporate Plan, looking at the work undertaken during 2004 on areas covered by Theme 5 of the Corporate Plan and exploring the key activities to be undertaken in the coming years. A second update was presented to the Board in September 2005 by David Cameron as Danny Alexander had left the organisation in March and Françoise van Buuren did not join CNPA until mid-October. A third update was presented in April 2006 which included details of the proposed communications programme for 2006-2008 and the fourth update was presented in September 2006.
2. Theme five of the current Corporate Plan is: **“to be an open, innovative and professional organisation that engages effectively with the public and behaves with integrity”**. This theme relates both to the internal workings of the organisation and its relations with the general public. The wording of the theme reflects the outcome of work to identify our core organisational values. These are as follows:
 - a) **Integrity** - Honest, trustworthy, fair, reliable, consistent, clarity of vision, good leadership, prudent.
 - b) **Open & inclusive** - Transparent, clear, approachable, accessible, accountable, responsive, listening, user-friendly, public-focused, fun to work for and with.
 - c) **Innovative** - Dynamic, bold, willing to take risks, supportive and trusting atmosphere, learning from mistakes, embracing new technology, high environmental standards.
 - d) **Professional** - Committed, competent, knowledgeable, responsible, efficient, getting things done.
3. Everyone in the organisation - staff and board - is responsible for ensuring that we live up to these values. However, specific work to deliver this theme is largely the responsibility of two Groups with an organisation wide responsibility – Strategy & Communications and Corporate Services. This paper therefore primarily focuses on the work programme being taken forward by these two groups.
4. This paper aims to complement the regular, more detailed, quarterly updates on delivery of the operational plan, by providing an overview of activity within this general theme.

Open and Inclusive, Engaging with the public

5. The Communications Strategy prepared in June 2004, identified four principles that underpin our communication - openness, clarity, pro-activity, and responsiveness and four target audiences - local people; opinion formers; the people of Scotland; and visitors and potential visitors to the area. Our objective has been to develop our

reputation as an 'enabling' organisation that is trusted and respected and to keep people informed about our work through our communications activity.

6. In January 2007 further work refined these target audiences to help prioritise our activities by focusing on four target audiences – local communities; local businesses; land managers within the Park; and our public sector partners. In addition, work would need to focus on opinion formers including politicians, NGOs and the media. It was agreed that these target audiences all play a vital role in helping us deliver the National Park Plan and the aims of the National Park.
7. Effective communication is needed to ensure all partners and interested parties understand why there is a Cairngorms National Park, what makes it so special and what needs to be done to protect and promote the Park for the benefit and enjoyment of everyone. Partners need to understand and support the Park aims and Priorities for Action set out in the National Park Plan and be aware of their role and contribution to achieve them. A Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Strategy Board paper has been prepared which sets out how we will achieve this objective and an opinion poll will be carried out during 2008/09 to measure the effectiveness of our activities since 2004.
8. Progress to date includes: the draft National Park Plan, deposit Local Plan, Outdoor Access Strategy and Core Path Plan consultations; production and distribution of CNPA and Cairngorms National Park promotional materials including our annual reports, the finalised National Park Plan and Outdoor Access Strategy, deposit Local Plan and consultative Core Paths Plan; production and distribution of *Parklife* and National Park Plan Summary to all residents and businesses within the Park; production of a monthly e-bulletin; continued development of the CNPA website; positive media coverage promoting the work of the CNPA; various Ministerial visits to the Park and briefings with Ministers and Scottish Executive officials; attendance at various events including all the Party Political conferences during Spring 2006, LINK's Scottish Environment Week at Holyrood, the Royal Highland Show and various local events such as the Balmoral Road Race, Outsider Festival and the Lonach and Braemar Gatherings. In addition, all formal Board and Planning Committee meetings are held in public and pre-Board meetings are held around the Park and provide local residents with the chance to meet Board members.
9. Standards for community engagement for the Park Authority have been developed and tested and a final proposal will be presented to the Board by the end of this year.
10. Considerable work is going into the National Park Plan priority for action (led by Murray Ferguson) which focuses on developing awareness and understanding of the Park and a draft delivery plan agreed with our partners is currently being prepared.
11. It should be remembered, given the limited resources of the Strategy & Communications Group, much of the success of the communications programme

depends on the support and active involvement of the Board, CNPA staff and other partner organisations.

Professionalism and Integrity

12. The Strategy & Communications and Corporate Services Groups continue to work together to deliver our joint objectives. The “Building the Organisation” project has seen improvements to our internal communications, IT, support services, training and the way in which staff and Board works together. A review of our organisational structure was also completed with the involvement and support of the staff consultative forum which resulted in a minor re-structuring of the organisation.
13. Continuing the practice of annually reviewing and challenging our service delivery and the effectiveness of it, an organisational away-day has been organised for October which will focus on the role of the CNPA and its role in co-ordinating and leading the collective delivery of the Park Plan in order to prepare our Corporate Plan for 2008-2011.
14. We continue to coordinate training opportunities, while supporting individual training requirements identified as part of the appraisal review process. We have put general programmes in place covering project management, customer service, health and safety practice and procedure, equality regulations and developing effective staff and board working.

Retention and Reward

15. We invested a considerable amount of time in the development and submission of a pay remit covering 2006/07 and 2007/08, following consultation with the Staff Forum. The Board’s Staffing and Recruitment Committee were kept up to date with the progress of this submission which was finally agreed in March 2007. Negotiations between the Authority and the Pay Unit have already begun in relation to the 2008/09 pay award.
16. The pay remit, once agreed with the Scottish Executive, sets out the Authority’s permitted maximum levels of increases to salaries to cover changes in cost of living, and staff progression through established salary scales. The pay award and salary progression based on the approved Performance Related Pay system is clearly an important aspect of the Authority’s retention policy, in which we aim to retain a high quality, professional staff group, while the consequential impact of pay awards on our salary scales will impact on our ability to recruit.
17. Pay is, of course, by no means the sole focus of the Authority’s recruitment and retention strategy. We have engaged with staff representatives on the Staff Consultative Forum and benchmarked our terms and conditions against a range of other NDPBs. From this exercise, we have been able to demonstrate that we

compare reasonably well with these comparable organisations, while being able to identify areas for further discussion with staff representatives.

Innovation

Risk management

18. We have further progressed the Authority's risk management processes, embedding review of the strategic risk register as part of the Management Team's quarterly review of progress against operational and corporate plans. As reported to the Board in August, we are also developing a balanced scorecard model to provide a risk based assessment of the organisation's progress in delivering priority activities, while monitoring the sustainability of that delivery in terms of the organisation's financial, staffing and governance position.
19. These risk management processes are intended to support rather than obstruct innovation. We seek to develop and advocate new ideas and methods of delivery, and our risk management processes are intended to highlight potential issues which may arise in implementing new methods in order that staff can take appropriate action.

Efficient Government

20. We have invested a considerable amount of staff time over the last six months in progressing the Authority's involvement in the Efficient Government Initiative and also in the Scottish Executive's Environment and Rural Affairs Department's (SEERAD) "On the Ground" programme. One strand of this latter project contributes to a degree to Efficient Government: looking at how bodies within the SEERAD "family" can collaborate to achieve efficiencies and improve effectiveness in operations. A second strand is focused more on the provision of integrated services to customers: for example common grant processes; reducing duplication and bureaucracy in the various returns clients may be required to make to different organisations within ERAD; common approach to land management contracts.
21. This has given rise to a number of projects that we will be pursuing over the remainder of this year:
 - a) We are collaborating in a consortium tendering for a joint recruitment advertising / media advertising contract, worth around £4.8m over 4 years and being led by the Forestry Commission.
 - b) We are discussing the movement of our IT servers into SNH's Wide Area Network. This will greatly improve the communication capacity between Ballater and Grantown offices, and allow the Authority to use SNH's helpdesk function.
 - c) We will consider the use of some of SNH's office systems, such as their financial software and electronic records and document management system.
 - d) We are collaborating with other SEERAD NDPBs in delivery of training, with places on internal training programmes being offered to all other organisations.

22. While seeking to generate some financial savings, particularly in support service costs, these projects will help us to develop and maintain new systems where the costs of doing so as a single, small organisation would have been prohibitively expensive. Savings in support services may also be recycled into delivery of new "front-line" activities. There is no risk to the security of employment within the Authority from our participation in these projects.
23. Early this year £10k was received from the 'Awards For All' Programme to part fund the public element of the Land Based Business Training Project. Currently some £315k of external funding is under investigation by the External Funding Officer to co-finance a number of Park-wide projects for 2007/08.

Health and Safety

24. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and its associated regulations, the Authority has a duty to comply with all relevant statutory obligations and actively manage health and safety within the organisation. The Board ultimately has responsibility for ensuring the Authority complies with these various requirements. This duty is discharged through the Chief Executive ensuring that staff within the Authority put in place appropriate arrangements to ensure health and safety at work, and act responsibly in accordance with these arrangements. The Corporate Services Group leads on the development, implementation and review of Health and Safety policy and practice within the organisation, while the Board's Audit Committee and the Staff Consultative Forum have an oversight of arrangements within the Authority to ensure adequate Health and Safety policies and procedures are in place.
25. We have developed a Health and Safety Policy Statement that has been agreed with the Staff Consultative Forum, and also developed individual policies on Personal Protective Equipment and Incident and Accident Reporting. We have drafted guidance on lone working and are seeking to contract with a call-logging service to give staff working out of hours a facility to register details of their work and intended return time. A copy of the draft Health and Safety policy statement is presented at Annex 1 to this paper.
26. A qualified Health and Safety consultant has also been engaged in reviewing all premises and health and safety documentation. Following receipt of the consultant's report, we are now in the process of revising the Authority's Health and Safety policy document. This will be finalised through the Authority's Management Team, Staff Consultative Forum and Audit Committee.
27. The Authority's internal auditors have proposed to the Audit Committee that they should undertake an independent review of Health and Safety arrangements at the end of this year.

Technology and Environment

28. In addition to the collaborative work on the development of the Authority's IT infrastructure mentioned at point 21 above, we have been developing draft business continuity plans for the continuation of operations in the event of system failures, together with associated risk assessments of the various elements of our IT systems. We are also in the process of developing a longer term IT strategy and associated IT investment plans.
29. We have supported the work of the Authority's Greening Committee since the Board's approval of the Greening Strategy and action plan. In accordance with the Board's recommendation, the early work of the Greening Committee has been to focus on prioritising potential improvements on a cost:benefit basis. The Committee has focused on seeking to reduce carbon emissions from travel, promoting the use of public transport when appropriate (e.g. use of trains for travel to the central belt) and considering the replacement of pool cars (three of which are due to be replaced over the course of this year). We have also initiated a review of the premises in order to prioritise any actions which may be taken on energy efficiency and recycling opportunities.
30. Further updates will be made to the Audit Committee and in future theme update reports.

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