

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

CONFIDENTIAL: FOR DECISION

Title: PROPOSAL TO SIGN THE TOURISM DECLARES INITIATIVE

Prepared by: MURRAY FERGUSON DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND PLACE

Purpose

This paper sets out the background to the Tourism Declares (a climate emergency) initiative and presents the rationale behind CNPA signing it now as a demonstration of the organisation's awareness of the climate emergency and commitment to lead a programme of appropriate action, along with partners, for the National Park. The proposal has been discussed with relevant partners and through the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership. The paper is confidential to allow us time to manage communication issues and to present a unified approach with the Cairngorms Business Partnership who are also currently considering signing the Declaration.

Recommendations

That the Board:

- a) **note the information about the Tourism Declares initiative and the discussions that have taken place with partners to date;**
- b) **note the intention of the Cairngorms Business Partnership to sign the Declaration; and**
- c) **agree to sign the declaration on behalf of the Cairngorms National Park.**

PROPOSAL TO SIGN THE TOURISM DECLARES INITIATIVE – FOR DECISION

Strategic Context

1. Tourism Declares is an industry-led initiative to take action to address climate change. The initiative supports tourism businesses, organisations and individuals in declaring a climate emergency and taking purposeful action to reduce their carbon emissions as per the advice from The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to cut global carbon emissions to 55% below 2017 levels by 2030. Further information is available at <https://www.tourismdeclares.com/>
2. The initiative was founded in January 2020 and is based on a combination of factors: that the complex nature of the tourism industry; its climate impacts (especially through aviation); and its potential for positive influence and transformative change, all necessitate the creation of an industry-specific, climate emergency initiative. The need for this approach has become even more urgent as the tourism industry looks to recover, re-imagine and renew from the COVID-19 crisis.
3. The initiative now has over 300+ members – all are committed to align with the need to cut emissions in half by 2030, and publish Climate Action Plans. A full list of members can be seen here <https://www.tourismdeclares.com/who-has-declared>
4. The initiative is aligned with overarching Race to Zero campaign which is the global campaign (United Nations Climate Change) to rally leadership and support from businesses, cities, regions, investors for a healthy, resilient, zero carbon recovery that prevents future threats, creates decent jobs, and unlocks inclusive, sustainable growth. Further information is at <https://unfccc.int/climate-action/race-to-zero-campaign>
5. Scotland has been described by Tourism Declares as leading the field internationally in this important area of work regarding the tourism industry and climate change. Scotland is already very well represented within the sector – including national and regional destinations organisations, certification companies, restaurants, visitor attractions, tour operators, etc. VisitScotland signed the Declaration in November 2020, along with SailScotland and WildScotland, and was the first national tourism destination organisation to do so. The Glasgow Convention Bureau is the only regional destination to sign up in Scotland so far.
6. The organisation Tourism Declares supports the organisations who have signed up, and this area of work generally, in a number of different ways, for example:

- a) Ensuring alignment and consistency between international, national and regional approaches – for example, by aligning sector plans on five shared pathways to Net Zero
 - b) Advising on issues such as Measurement, Decarbonisation, Regeneration, Collaboration and Finance
 - c) Advising on Climate Action Blueprints – for Destinations, Tour Operators and Accommodation at COP26 to help sectors create Climate Action Plans aligned with Glasgow Declaration pathways
 - d) Coordination of an expert working group
 - e) Organising Climate Action Workshops – with NECSTouR, Future of Tourism and Oregon to enable Climate Action Plans aligned with the Declaration.
 - f) Climate Action Certification – working with Green Tourism Global Destination Sustainability Index and Fair Trade Tourism to embed aligned Climate Action Plans in certification criteria.
7. Organisations signing up to Tourism Declares must commit to the following five actions:

1. Development of a ‘Climate Action Plan’

To be adopted by the relevant executive board* within 12 months of initial declaration, or sooner if possible.

2. Share their commitment and progress publicly

Share the initial public declaration, the ‘Climate Action Plan’, and update on progress against your targets each year.

3. Cut carbon emissions

Accept current IPCC advice stating the need to cut global carbon emissions to 55% below 2017 levels by 2030 to keep the planet within 1.5 degrees of warming. Ensure that the ‘Climate Action Plan’ represents actions designed to achieve this as a minimum, through delivering transparent, measurable and increasing reductions in the total carbon emissions per trip arising from your operations and the travel services sold*.

4. Work together

Encourage suppliers and partners to make the same declaration; share best practice amongst peers; and actively participate in the Tourism Declares community.

5. Advocate for change

Recognise the need for system change across the industry to accelerate a just transition towards carbon-free tourism.

** Tourism Declares recognises that not everyone working in tourism has a company board or sells products. For simplicity everyone is encouraged to sign this one declaration.*

Why sign the Declaration now?

8. It is timely for CNPA to move towards signing the Declaration at this time because:
 - a) We are at a key stage of preparing the National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) which will set out the policy and actions of the management of the Park up to 2045. The approval and delivery of the NPPP would fulfil the function of the Climate Action Plan that is required by Tourism Declares.
 - b) In March 2021 the CNPA agreed to ‘Approve a commitment for the Cairngorms National Park to achieve net zero emissions by 2045 at the latest and to review that timescale in light of planned carbon budget work in 2021/22 and include in NPPP.’ The Tourism Declares is in line with this decision already taken by the Board for the CNP to achieve net zero by 2045 at the latest.
 - c) The informal consultation on the Park Plan has already shown there is considerable enthusiasm for action to address climate change in the Park – for example, 92% of respondents said it was either important or very important that individuals, communities, businesses and others took action to tackle climate change.
 - d) In discussion with partners, and through the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership, there is enthusiasm for us signing the Declaration now as way to demonstrate our leadership in the field in Scotland in the Cairngorms National Park.
 - e) The successful funding bid to Heritage Horizons programme of the Project “Cairngorms 2030: People and Nature thriving together” has secured the financial commitments and partner support to deliver very significant programme of activity over the next seven years.
 - f) It would be timely to sign now, in advance of COP26 in Glasgow in November – the Cairngorms National Park would be one of the very first regional tourism destinations in Scotland to do so.

Partner Support

9. The proposal was discussed by the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership in August 2021. There was strong support, as noted above. Two key points stood out from the discussion. First, it was noted that this approach, of showing leadership in a complex field where change was required, was exactly the sort of role that was expected of National Parks in Scotland and the role which we should fulfil. Second, there was

enthusiasm not just to sign the Declaration and for it to be a paper exercise, but for this new approach to help prompt and deliver real change on the ground in the way in which tourism activity is conducted.

10. The Cairngorms Business Partnership are also currently discussing signing the Declaration with their membership. The relevant CBP Board meeting to decide on this matter is on 8 September and so, by the time of the CNPA Board meeting, their formal position will be known. It is proposed that we make a joint announcement about signing the Declaration.

Implications

11. There are no direct financial implications for CNPA of signing the Declaration. There is no fee and the delivery expectations are already in line with planned work on delivering the Corporate and National Park Plans.
12. The presentational implications are entirely positive – we have made the Scottish Government sponsor division aware of our intentions to sign the Declaration in advance of COP 26.

Next steps

13. The next steps are to sign the Declaration share the news with others. Appropriate material will be uploaded to CNPA website and references inserted into the Draft Park Plan. Looking forwards, activity will be reported back via the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership and the CNPA Board.

CNPA

1st September 2021