CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: **IMPLEMENTING THE CAIRNGORMS BRAND**

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Purpose

To update the Board on progress to date with the development of the Cairngorms Brand and to seek approval for the process by which the Brand will be implemented across the Park, and to agree consequent changes to the Cairngorms National Park Authority logo.

Recommendations

That the board:
- **endorse progress to date on process of the development of the visual identity, including its early uses;**
- **agree that use of the Brand for marketing and promotional activity will be linked to appropriate existing quality assurance schemes;**
- **agree that quality assurance schemes will be considered suitable for linking to the Cairngorms Brand if they deliver the aims of the Park, fit with the brand values, and support the aims of the sustainable tourism strategy. The overall picture of all schemes associated with the brand should ensure that there is wide industry penetration;**
- **agree to the principle that the Brand can only be used on products for direct sale subject to license, and that any revenue generated from such licenses should be directed to projects that focus on conservation of the natural and cultural heritage within the Park. Further work should be undertaken to develop the best system for managing these arrangements;**
- **agree the establishment of a Brand Management Committee to take decisions about how the Brand should be implemented and used;**
- **agree that the use of the Brand should be encouraged through our existing work programme;**
- **agree that £10,000 should be allocated to encourage use of the brand in collaborative marketing and events in the remainder of this financial year;**
- **approve the insertion of the word 'Authority' to the CNPA's corporate logo;**
- **agree that the CNPA logo should only be used as a corporate logo to represent official business of the Park Authority. It should not be used in a broader context to promote the Park area.**

Executive Summary

The development of a Cairngorms brand is widely supported by the tourist industry and communities as a means of presenting a coherent visual identity for the area. A strong brand will provide a useful tool in the delivery of a wide range of marketing and promotional activity in support of the aims of the Park.

The process for developing the Brand is now complete, following extensive market research and involving the local community and local businesses. This paper seeks endorsement for the process so far, and agreement to the next steps in implementing the Brand.

IMPLEMENTING THE CAIRNGORMS BRAND

Background

1.   The designation of the area as a National Park provides an opportunity to develop a coherent and integrated approach to the marketing and promotion of the area. The development of a Cairngorms Brand is a useful tool in the creation of an identity for the area to be used in all marketing and promotional activity. The intention is, through the provision of a visual identity that the Cairngorms Brand will enhance, not replace existing strong brands operating in the area. It will provide an additional marketing tool for businesses and will act as an umbrella for the diverse communities of interest in the Park area and in this way support the delivery of the 4 aims of the Park.

The Role of the CNPA

2.   The development of the Cairngorms Brand is a classic example of the CNPA acting in an enabling role. We are funding – along with Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board, who are providing 30% of the costs through an EU-funded programme – and managing the development of a brand that will principally be used by other organisations and businesses. By working in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, we are promoting a benefit for the whole of the Park, and which will largely be taken forward by others.

Progress Update

3.   In February 2004 key stakeholders from the tourism industry (including members of the Tourism Development Working Group(TDWG)) in the Cairngorms met to develop a "Brand Wheel" for the Cairngorms (appendix 1). The purpose of the exercise was to establish a distilled version of what the brand is all about. The "wheel" is not something the consumer will see, more that it forms the underlying rationale for the brand. The wheel was subsequently endorsed by the TDWG.

4.   In June 2004, the Board approved a paper on 'developing a Cairngorms Brand', with attached design brief, including the financial commitment to the design development and market testing processes. In July 2004, the Board endorsed the Cairngorms Tourism Marketing Strategy in which developing the Brand is a key action.

5.   Following the agreement of the Board in June 2004, the work to develop the visual identity was put out to tender. Eight companies were invited to tender, and of these four were invited to interview. An interview panel comprising Sally Dowden, Danny Alexander, Ruathy Donald, Alastair Gronbach of Visit Scotland, and Ian Dunlop, of Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board, was convened. Following a series of interviews on 21 July, Navy Blue were appointed to carry out this work.

6.   The brief to which Navy Blue were required to work specified a number of key requirements for the visual identity:
        a. The visual identity should reflect the 'brand values' of the Cairngorms National Park, as defined in the brand wheel and other work;

b. The identity created should be highly flexible, able to sit alongside other identities and be able to be used in a wide range of circumstances, from signage to leaflets;

c. There should be strong stakeholder involvement in the development process, because if the Brand is to succeed it needs to be supported and welcomed by businesses and communities in the Park; and

d. Proposed designs should be thoroughly market-tested with consumers (ie visitors and potential visitors to the area) and stakeholders before a decision is made to ensure that the chosen Brand communicates the right values and messages.

7. A broadly-based Steering Group was established for the project. In addition to those present on the interview panel, this also included representatives from the Association of Cairngorms Community Councils and the Food Marketing Working Group, with a member of staff from the CNPA Visitor Services and Recreation Group added at a later stage. The purpose of this group is to ensure that all user groups are involved in overseeing the process and in taking the final decision on the visual identity.

8. Following their appointment, Navy Blue undertook a substantial familiarisation and research process before starting design work. Members of the team working on the project visited the area a number of times, meeting local businesses and visiting key attractions. They also attended the interpretative workshops conducted by Sam Ham in September and the Sustainable Tourism Workshop in October.

9. In addition to the Brand Wheel, and the visits described above, the written outcomes of the Sam Ham workshops were a key input into the design process. Participants in these workshops included local business-people, land managers, community representatives and agency representatives – the full range of people who might in due course wish to make use of the brand.

10. Drawing on all of these inputs, Navy Blue presented a series of 7 possible design options to a meeting of the Branding Steering Group in October. Following extensive discussion and feedback from the meeting, Navy Blue revised these designs into 3 options to be taken into the market testing process.

11. At the Steering Group meeting in October, it was also agreed that a twin-track approach would be taken to consulting on and testing the three options.
a. First, a package of market testing, to be undertaken by a consultancy called Scott Porter Research, would be carried out with consumers and stakeholders in order to evaluate in detail whether the ideas successfully communicated the brand values and to establish what refinements or amendments would be necessary.
b. Second, a series of presentations would be given to stakeholder groups in order to get their views and to ensure that they were fully involved in the process.

12. It was agreed that the presentations to stakeholder groups would also seek their views on the process through which the Brand would be rolled out.

13. From mid-November to mid-December, Danny Alexander and Heather Galbraith gave full presentations and sought feedback on the visuals and the roll-out of the brand to the following groups:
a. Association of Cairngorms Community Councils

b. Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce
c. Cairngorms Attractions Group
d. CNPA ViSIT Forum
e. CNPA Food Marketing Working Group
f. ABSC Marketing Group
g. CNPA board members
h. CNPA staff

14. With regard to the visuals, three broad conclusions were drawn from these presentations:
   a. There is strong support for the process and for the idea of having a brand, and for the inclusive way in which we have going about the process;
   b. There was a wide range of views about the different design routes, but a general steer towards one particular design route, and an understanding that not everyone will get what they want; and
   c. There was wide recognition of the importance of the results of the formal market testing being conducted by Scott Porter, especially with consumers. How the people who will be visiting the place or consuming its produce react to the brand is of paramount importance in making the decision and should lead the process.

15. During early December, Scott Porter conducted 3 focus groups with consumers and 2 with stakeholders. Stakeholder participants were drawn from individuals nominated by local communities, local businesses, recreational users, and relevant agencies. The consumer research took place in Edinburgh and Glasgow and involved a range of people of different ages and from different social groups.

16. The market testing carried out by Scott Porter in December reported that one design route was clearly preferred and successfully communicated the brand values. Several amendments were suggested.

17. Navy Blue carried out the amendments as suggested from the market testing, as well as improving the legibility of the typeface, an issue that had been raised during the stakeholder presentations.

18. The revised design was then subjected to further market testing in early January, as suggested by Board Members. Scott Porter carried out two further focus groups in Leeds, which included people who had not previously visited the Cairngorms.

19. The conclusions of all of the market testing were presented in full to a meeting of the branding steering group on 13 January. Following discussion, it was agreed to proceed with the recommended design route as the Cairngorms Brand.

20. It is proposed that the brand should be publicly launched in early March, ahead of the start of the main tourist season. Early applications of the brand will include the Cairngorms Visitor Guide 2005. In previous board discussions, it has been made clear that the aim is integrate the Brand into the permanent Entry Point Markers that are being developed. It is also planned that the Brand be used on interim metals signs at entry points to the Park. It is intended that these interim signs will erected at 10 key

points of entry on roads, and also at railway stations, and that all of these should be erected as soon as possible in time for the 2005 tourist season.

21. The Brand will be registered as a trademark and the CNPA already owns the copyright to it, providing a measure of protection against unauthorised use.

Recommendation

22. The Board endorse progress to date on process of the development of the visual identity, including its early uses.

Rolling Out the Brand

23. Developing and agreeing the visual identity is only a relatively small part of building a successful brand. In the end the brand will succeed or fail according to how it is used and how widely it is used. Hence, the approach that is taken to deciding who can and cannot use the brand is critical. This is particularly important in the Cairngorms context, because of range of uses to which the brand could be put. Tourism businesses, marketing groups, communities, food producers, and local arts and cultural bodies could all expect to use the brand.

24. Discussion of the possible ways that the brand could be rolled out formed a key part of the presentations to stakeholder groups, described in point 14. Three broad approaches that could be taken to developing criteria that could be used to decide who and how the brand should be used were outlined. These options are as follows.

25. Option 1: 'anyone and everyone'. This approach would allow anyone to use the brand subject only to simple geographic criteria. This would have the advantage of being easy to manage, very inclusive, and the ease of use would encourage widespread adoption of the brand. The disadvantages of this approach are that there would be no control over the use of the brand, it would be open to misuse, and it would be easy for the brand values – as described by the Brand Wheel - to be undermined. The brand would lose meaning, and this in itself could actually be a deterrent to use in some quarters.

26. Option 2: adoption of existing standards. In this scenario, the right to use the brand would be available to those in the Cairngorms who meet certain already existing standards or criteria. For example, businesses who are part of the Green Tourism Scheme could then be allowed to use the brand. The disadvantage of this route is some potential users may be reluctant to join schemes due to fees or other concerns, or there may not be appropriate existing schemes in particular areas. It could also be difficult to ensure a level playing field between sectors.

27. However, option 2 has a number of advantages. Firstly, it encourages quality and buy-in to the brand values. By requiring certain standards the brand would be seen to mean something, without imposing an additional bureaucratic burdens either on the CNPA or brand users. A majority of tourism businesses are quality assured, and the Brand may be an additional incentive to encourage others to qualify, thereby helping with the wider objective of raising standards across the Park.

28. Option 3: a bespoke scheme. This would involve the development of a new licensing scheme for the Park, through which applicants would have to pass before being allowed to use the brand. This would have the advantage that it would be tailored exclusively to the requirements of the Cairngorms National Park. It would therefore by more exclusive, and would very specifically promote buy-in to the brand values. On the downside, setting up a new quality assurance scheme would be extremely labour-intensive and financially costly. Furthermore, the time it would take to develop would mean that the Brand could not be rolled out on the timescale that is currently envisaged – ie a scheme could not be ready in time for a March launch in time for the 2005 tourist season. The additional burden of having to go through another new process would mean that the Brand would not be so widely used.

29. The key points raised in response to these options at each of the presentations are summarised at Appendix 2. While a variety of views were expressed, there was a clear steer towards some version of Option 2.

30. There was also a strong feeling that it would be wrong to rush the roll-out process. Once the brand is out there and in use in a particular sector or form, it cannot be taken back. Though it may be frustrating for some potential users, we need to ensure that we have the right system in place in each sector before progressing. This will certainly mean that some sectors will be able to use the brand before others. We will manage this through a clear process of explanation to stakeholder groups.

How Will The Brand Be Used?

31. There are two distinct ways in which the brand could be used, which need to be treated differently.

32. Firstly, it could be used by businesses and communities in support of their own marketing and promotional activity – this is the principal use for which the Brand was conceived.

33. Secondly, the Brand could be used on products and merchandising for direct sales. Products which do nothing more than directly exploit the imagery could include T-shirts, mugs, and other merchandising.

Criteria For Use In Marketing And Promotion

34. If we are to allow the Brand to be used conditionally with relevant existing quality assurance schemes, the question remains as to how this will work in practice. In particular, it needs to be clear how relevant schemes are to be chosen, who makes such a decision, based on what criteria.

35. Rather than the CNPA selecting which existing schemes are appropriate for use with the brand, it is proposed that at this stage we agree criteria which existing schemes need to meet in order to be suitable for linking to the brand. It is proposed that these are as follows:

a. Fit with aims of the Park. In order to be suitable for linkage to the brand, schemes must support the delivery of the 4 aims of the Cairngorms National Park.

b. Sustainable tourism strategy. In the case of tourism, schemes will only be deemed suitable for linking to the brand if they clearly support the delivery of the principles of the sustainable tourism strategy. For example, this year the CNPA will be supporting the provision of 'product knowledge training' to ensure that tourism providers have a good level of knowledge about the Park as a whole, its aims and objectives. A commitment to undertaking this training could be attached to use of the Brand.

c. Fit with brand values. To be used in association with the brand, schemes must fit with and support the brand values as defined by the Brand Wheel.

d. Industry penetration rates. In considering whether a scheme should be associated with the brand, it will be important to consider the extent to which it is already used by the relevant sector within the Park. Given the wish to see the Brand used as widely as it can be consistent with the points above, preference should be given to schemes that are used by a significant number of outlets in the Park.

e. Cost implications for stakeholders. Most quality assurance schemes have some level of cost attached to them. To ensure that the brand is widely used, efforts must be made to ensure that it is not only the most financially burdensome schemes that are associated with the brand.

f. Finally, we will need to ensure that the schemes we choose are monitored and that their benefits are understood.

36. In sectors where there are no criteria in place, the approach to the use of the brand can be decided on a case-by-case basis by the Brand Management Committee (see below).

Recommendation

37. That the Board agree that use of the Brand for marketing and promotional activity will be linked to appropriate existing quality assurance schemes.

38. That the Board agree that quality assurance schemes will be considered suitable for linking to the Cairngorms Brand if they deliver the aims of the Park, fit with the brand values, and support the sustainable tourism strategy. The overall picture of schemes associated with the brand should ensure that there are wide industry penetration rates and reasonable costs for users.

Licensing The Brand For Direct Sales

39. Examples of this category could include T-shirts, pens, mugs, maps and so on. In other National Parks, such products have proved to be attractive to visitors.

40. One possible way to manage this category would be that any group that has satisfied the process described above could produce their own branded T-shirts, for example. This would have the disadvantage of risking a proliferation of different designs, while the benefit from such products would be spread thinly.

41.   An alternative route would be that the rights to produce specific products for direct sale that use the Brand would be licensed to a limited number of providers in each case. By issuing licenses, quality could be ensured.

42.   If we pursue this route, it would be important to ensure that some of the benefit from sales of such products is invested in the Park. Through the sustainable tourism strategy, we are committed to ensuring that tourism activities work to the benefit of the natural environment. This could be clearly demonstrated by agreeing to the principle that revenues that may be generated as a condition of such licenses would be directed to projects that focus on conservation of the natural and cultural heritage within the Park. Furthermore, this principle would be a key factor in deciding to whom any licenses should be issued.

43.   The practicalities of such an arrangement will need further research. For example, it might require a company to be set up to administer the licenses, or a trust to be established in order to handle the revenue.

44.   This section does not apply to food products produced within the Park. Food Marketing is being looked at separately and proposals, which may include some form of licensing, will be brought forward in due course.

Recommendation

45.   That the Board agree to the principle that the Brand can only be used on products for direct sale subject to license, and that any revenue generated as a condition of such licenses should be directed to projects that focus on conservation of the natural and cultural heritage within the Park. Further work should be undertaken to develop the best system for managing these arrangements.

Brand Management Group

46.   If the Brand is to be successful, those who are using it need to have a sense of ownership of it. While the CNPA will retain legal ownership of the visual identity, it is proposed that decisions about how the brand is implemented and used should be taken by a Brand Management Committee, subject to criteria stated above.

47.   Furthermore, in some sectors there will not be any appropriate criteria in place at all. The Brand Management Committee will be able to develop an approach that can be taken in each such case that arises.

48.   The Brand Management Committee would be a small group, comprising representatives from the Association of Cairngorms Community Councils, the Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce, the Food Marketing Group (or other such food marketing body that may be established in the future), VisitScotland, CNPA board members and relevant staff. CNPA representatives on the group should report to the Board from time to time about its activities.

Recommendation

49. **That the Board agree the establishment of a Brand Management Committee to take decisions about how the Brand should be implemented and used.**

Supporting Early Actions

50.   In order to facilitate take up of the brand, we need to consider to what extent CNPA resources should be allocated to this task.

51.   Clearly, delivering the various outputs described above will take up significant staff time. On the current assessment, this can be met through existing staff resources proposed in the Corporate Plan.

52.   As stated in para 3 (above), the CNPA has already devoted significant resources to developing the Brand which will then largely be used by, or in partnership with, others.

53.   It would not be appropriate for the CNPA to allocate funds solely to promote use of the Brand as we would run the risk of subsidising activities that are already commercially viable.

54.   However, there is considerable scope within our current and future work programme to encourage the use of the brand as part of our support for other activities. Promoting use of the Brand should be a key strand in future grants schemes operated by the CNPA, which will be the subject of discussion at a future Board meeting.

55.   One significant area in which the Brand could be applied is through our work with tourist information providers - especially Tourist Information Centres – and with Ranger Services. Work to do this is being progressed, and will be discussed in more detail in future Board papers on Rangers Services and Interpretation Strategy.

56.   One area of activity that we wish to encourage is collaborative marketing and events in the private sector. While support for this is included in the proposed Corporate Plan for future years, it is recommended that £10,000 is allocated for this purpose in the remainder of the current financial year. This support will help to give the brand some impetus in the early months.

Recommendation

57. **That the Board agree that the use of the Brand should be encouraged in through our existing work programme.**

58. **That the Board agree that £10,000 should be allocated to encourage use of the brand in collaborative marketing and events in the rest of this financial year.**

Implications For The Use Of The CNPA Logo

59.   The CNPA logo was developed as a corporate identity for the organisation. The launch of the brand for the broader promotion of the Park area clearly has implications for the use of the CNPA logo, in order to minimise the possibility of confusion arising between the two.

60.   As a basic rule, the CNPA logo should only be used as a corporate logo to represent official business of the Park Authority. It should not be used in a broader context to promote the Park area.

61.   The CNPA logo should continue to be used on all official communications of the Park Authority, such as letterheads, business cards, board papers, and so on.

62.   Where the CNPA has funded or part-funded a project and a logo is displayed, that should be the logo of the Park Authority.

63.   Materials produced by the Park Authority to promote or present the area as a destination to visitors should, to ensure consistency of message, feature the Park Brand. In these cases, point 46 could also apply.

64.   The current CNPA logo uses the words 'Cairngorms National Park'. To make clear that this is the logo for the organisation, it is recommended that the word 'Authority' should be added to the CNPA logo.

Recommendation

65.   To approve the insertion of the word 'Authority' to the CNPA's logo.

66.   To agree that the CNPA logo should only be used as a corporate logo to represent official business of the Park Authority. It should not be used in a broader context to promote the Park area.

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1 February 2005

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