CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING
held at The Richmond Memorial Hall, Tomintoul
on Friday 11th February 2005 at 2pm

PRESENT

Eric Baird
Stuart Black
Duncan Bryden
Sally Dowden
Basil Dunlop
Angus Gordon
Lucy Grant
David Green (items 1-5)
Marcus Humphrey
Bruce Luffman
Eleanor Mackintosh
Anne MacLean

Alastair MacLennan
William McKenna
Sandy Park
Andrew Rafferty
Gregor Rimell (items 1-5)
David Selfridge
Joyce Simpson
Richard Stroud
Susan Walker
Bob Wilson

In Attendance:

Jane Hope
Danny Alexander
David Cameron
Fiona Newcombe
Murray Ferguson
Nick Halfhide
Gavin Miles
Hamish Trench
Heather Galbraith

Apologies:

Andrew Thin
Sheena Slimon
Douglas Glass

Welcome and Introduction

1. The deputy convenor welcomed all present, especially the students from Scottish Agricultural College, Aberdeen who were in the public gallery.

Minutes of Last Meeting – approval

2. The minutes of the previous meeting (14th January 2005) were approved.

Matters Arising

3. One matter was raised in relation to Paragraph 19a: the Head of Visitor Services reported that detailed proposals for the permanent entry point markers would be brought to the Board in May 2005, rather than March as reported in the Minutes. This would not affect the overall timetable for completion of the project.

Brand Development (Paper 1)

4. Danny Alexander introduced the paper which updated the Board on the progress with the development of the Cairngorms Brand and sought approval for the process by which the Brand would be implemented across the Park. The Principle behind developing the Brand was to ensure a coherent approach to Marketing of the Park area, for the benefit of both tourists and the consumer. The intention was to produce a brand that could be widely used, but would be separate and distinct from the logo of the Cairngorms National Park Authority. There were 4 objectives behind the work:
    * the development of a Brand which was inclusive;
    * a Brand which stood for something meaningful;
    * a Brand with the capacity to be used widely;
    * a Brand which supported the aims of the National Park.

5. A very thorough process for developing the Brand had been taken forward, following approval by the Board in June 2004 to the objectives. The process, which was set out in some detail in the paper, had been very inclusive, and this was an approach which was to be continued throughout the development and use of the Brand.

6. In discussion the following points were made:
    a) Work on developing the Brand had been partly funded through European monies obtained through Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board. The changes in the Tourist Board Structure which would happen on the 1st April 2005would not affect this stream of funding.
    b) The proposed use of a trademark to protect the use of the Cairngorms Brand was welcomed. However, this alone would not be complete protection against improper use. The proposed Brand Management Committee would oversee enforcement with respect to use of the Brand, helping to ensure that it remained the hallmark of quality. Guidelines for the use of the Brand were being

developed and enforcement of these guidelines would be the responsibility of the management committee. The point was made that the Committee would not be engaged in the details of enforcement, as this would be done through use of existing quality assurance schemes. The job of the management committee would be to set the criteria.

c) Measures would be brought forward for assessing the success or otherwise in the use of the Brand, including measures of take up, public awareness, etc. Results would be reported back to the Board from time to time.

d) Paragraph 56 referred to encouraging collaborative marketing and events in the private sector which would facilitate early use of the Brand. Examples of this included: promotion of the local walking festival across the whole of the National Park: the promotion farmers markets across the National Park, and it was hoped that others would be brought forward.

e) Market testing and consumer testing had been carried out during the development of the Brand. Early testing had strongly favoured the use of the Osprey, and a logo based on this had been designed and subjected to further market testing in January. The final design come through strongly in all of the testing.

f) There was some discussion as to whether or not the Brand had been too influenced by the tourism industry, particularly the development of the Brand Wheel which had contributed to the development of the Brand itself. The point was made that the brief for the brand made clear that what was sought was something that could be widely used. The Brand wheel was not a tourism Brand wheel, it was an internationally recognised system for branding a wide range of products. Although the process of developing the Brand Wheel had been instigated by the Tourism Development Working Group, it had never the less brought together for a whole day a very wide range of interests. It was a full branding exercise, and not just a tourism branding exercise. Nevertheless, it had to be recognised 80% of businesses in the area were related in one form or another to tourism. The point was also made that the Cairngorms Brand was in effect playing a supporting role for marketing in the area, it was not seeking to replace existing brands.

g) There was some discussion about the use of existing assurance schemes to control the use of the brand. The question was asked as to whether there was some confusion between the use of the Brand as a quality mark, and its use to promote the Cairngorms National Park. However, it was important to appreciate that the Brand had been developed in a way to ensure that people would be clear on the meaning of the Brand and this was partly about encapsulating the essence of the Cairngorms area and everything that was high quality about the area. There was some discussion about the two options set out at Paragraphs 25 and 26 for rolling out the Brand, and managing its use. There were particular advantages in option 2. While there was no suggestion that it would be only the VisitScotland QA system that was adopted, there were particular opportunities in tapping into the QA scheme at present given that it provided an opportunity to get across to a very big sector of the industry which historically been part of a QA scheme. VisitScotland were currently looking at the existing QA scheme, and how this could be widened to cover all aspects of the industry. It was important to use QA schemes that were already in place, and not try and reinvent the wheel; the development of the Park Brand along side the widening of the VisitScotland QA scheme provided an opportunity to raise quality standards across the whole of the

National Park. The point was also made that work was currently underway to draw together much more effectively the range of existing Quality Assurance schemes operated by a range of bodies. This would mean that there would be several routes in to the Cairngorms Brand.

h) Paragraphs 41 and 42 considered the possibility of licensing use of the Brand for direct sales, and recycling the revenue into projects that would benefit the environment. The point was made that such an arrangement should apply to activities that indirectly contribute to the natural environment as well as those that do so directly. It was agreed that a lot of further work was required to be done on the detail of these arrangements, and it was just the Board's agreement in principal which was sought at the current time.

i) Decisions on use of the Brand were likely to be difficult given the potentially very wide range of uses. A Brand Management group was therefore is essential, and this should have community involvement. The job of the management group would be to set the criteria for the Brand rather than the details of the schemes themselves.

j) Persuading people to use the Brand was not considered to be the primary aim of the exercise. The Brand was being developed in order to add value to the area as a whole, and to assist businesses within the National Park. It would take time for use of the Brand to build up, and for the reputation of the Brand to be developed. The intention was that the Board would receive reports on the use of the Brand from time to time.

k) There was some discussion about option one set out at Paragraph 25, under which anyone would be allowed to use the Brand subject only to simple geographic criteria. It was suggested that his approach would ensure a very high take up of the Brand, and that the second step might then be to raise the quality standards for use of the Brand and in this way raise general quality standards across the Park. In answer to this question a point was made that during the stakeholder assessment of the developing Brand it had been very clear that a large number of people were of the view that the Brand should be associated with high quality. There had also been a very clear view that it would be very difficult to raise standards once the use of the Brand had already been established at lower level. There were practical difficulties; not least, for example, it would be very difficult to prevent use of the Brand once somebody had previously been given permission.

l) Encouraging uptake of the Brand could be done in a number of ways. For example in the tourism sector one could aim to get the top 20% of the businesses, accounting for 60% of the bed nights, using the Brand. However, this would still leave a large section of the industry outwith the Brand. In practice it would be important to ensure uptake by businesses at each end of the spectrum. Particular effort would need to be directed at encouraging uptake by the businesses who traditionally found it difficult to be part of quality assurance schemes. It remained the case that there would never be 100% uptake. It was important to get as much uptake as possible across the spectrum of businesses and it was important that the Brand could support all types of businesses. This approach tied in with the work currently underway by VisitScotland on improving QA levels across the whole industry.

[Gregor Rimell left the meeting]

m) The money referred to at Paragraph 56 for facilitating early use of the Brand was intended as a kick-start. In subsequent years the use of the Brand would be incorporated into existing streams of work. Allocation of £10,000 for the current financial year was ambitious; however a number of potential projects were already lined up and expenditure in the current financial year should be possible.

7. The Deputy convenor summarised the three main areas of discussion as follows:
   a) A desire to ensure that the Brand encompassed a wide range of products, and not just tourism, reflecting the four aims of the National Park.
   b) The desire to ensure the Brand was associated with levels of quality, and encouraging users to contribute toward the delivery of all of the Park aims.
   c) The need to give more detailed thought to how income from the use of the Brand in certain cases of direct sales might be used. More detailed proposals would need to be brought back to the Board in due course.

8. **The papers recommendations were approved as follows:**

   a) **Endorsement of progress to date on process of the development of the visual identity, including its early uses;**
   b) **agreement that use of the Brand for marketing and promotional activity will be linked to appropriate existing quality assurance schemes;**
   c) **agreement 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;**
   d) **agreement 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;**
   e) **agreement to the establishment of a Brand Management Committee to take decisions about how the Brand should be implemented and used;**
   f) **agreement that the use of the Brand should be encouraged through our existing work programme;**
   g) **agreement that £10,000 should be allocated to encourage use of the brand in collaborative marketing and events in the remainder of this financial year;**
   h) **approval to insertion of the word 'Authority' to the CNPA's corporate logo;**
   i) **agreement 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.**

[David Green left the meeting]

9. **Action**
   a) **Head of Communications to report back to the board in due course on proposals for linking income from direct sales of branded products to environmental projects.**

Sustainability Appraisal (Paper 2)

10. Gavin Miles and Hamish Trench introduced the paper which sought the Board's approval for an approach to developing a methodology for sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental appraisal, which would be integrated with the National Park Plan and Local Plan processes.

11. In discussion the following points were made:
    a) There were dangers of raising false expectations, and it was important to recognise that the process would be iterative with the development of the National Park Plan and the Local Plan being the first opportunity to try out the sustainability appraisal, which was likely to be improved subsequently.
    b) It would be essential to avoid duplication, as there was a danger that the processes of developing an SEA and SA would replicate each other. The question was asked whether the approach outlined in paragraph 16 was allowable in the current legal framework. It was agreed that this would be checked with the Scottish Executive.
    c) The SEA was a well-prescribed process which applied to all other public bodies as well. The methodology which the Park Authority should adopt for SEA, should therefore be fairly well defined by March. Further work would then be needed to consider how that SEA process could be incorporated into a wider SA process, and it was this process which it was intended to be brought back to the Board for approval in July.
    d) It would be vital to work in tandem with other people developing methodology but also with those responsible for delivery of plans.

12. **The Board agreed the recommendations of the paper as follows:**

    a) **Noted that the CNPA is legally obliged to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment on its plans and policies in order to comply with the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive; and**
    b) **Approved the recommendation that the CNPA develop a methodology that incorporates the statutory requirement to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment within the broader framework of a Sustainability Appraisal.**

13. **Action:**
    a) **Proposed approach to sustainability appraisal to be brought back to the Board in July 2005.**

Corporate Plan – First Draft (Paper 3)

14. Jane Hope introduced the paper, which sought the Board's approval to a draft Corporate Plan for 2005 to 2008. She reminded the board that this was the second Corporate Plan for the CNPA, and covered a particularly important 3 year period for the National Park Authority during which the National Park Plan, the Local Plan, the Local Access Forum, and the Core Path Plan would be put in place. She drew to the Board's attention to three areas for discussion; the issue of priorities set out at Paragraph 9; the issues of staffing

resources set out at Paragraph 16; and the issue of performance measures covered by Table 1 of the Draft Plan.

15. In discussion the following points were made:

    a) As additional staff members joined the organisation, an updated staffing list would be sent to all members, as had been the practice.

    b) As a small organisation, a collaborative approach perhaps with other public bodies might usefully be taken to dealing with internal skills shortages through internal training scheme.

    c) At Paragraph 13 of the covering paper the words "only" in the last line might be misleading.

    d) It would be important to consider secondments out of the organisation as well as into it as a means of growing the experience and skills base of the organisation.

    e) An important goal was to increase the amount of funding at the disposal of the organisation. There was in fact a member of staff (funding officer) whose specific role was to lever in additional funding.

    f) Securing the Investors In People (IIP) award was a desirable action contributing to the goal of securing a professional, respected and motivated staff complement. However this would not necessarily be in the lifetime of the Corporate Plan 2005 to 2008.

    g) The proposal that there should be 7 priority goals within the proposed 19 was a sensible way forward. This would allow the organisation to deliver the key priority areas first, and by doing so create the climate for continuing the delivery of the other goals.
    [David Selfridge left the meeting]

    h) The current Corporate Plan included a goal of obtaining high levels of understanding and appreciation of the park and of the role of the Park Authority and its partners. This included work with young people. It was proposed that the work with young people should be separated out as a separate goal of its own.

    i) The use of projects with identified project funding and associated fixed term project posts should be borne in mind as an efficient and effective way of delivering the Park Aims.

16. **The paper's recommendations were approved as follows:**

    a) **The draft Corporate Plan, subject to the incorporation of an additional goal on achieving a good understanding and appreciation by young people of the Cairngorms National Park;**

    b) **The general approach to staffing levels at Paragraph 16;**

    c) **The Chief Executive to send the draft Plan to the Scottish Executive for approval;**

    d) **An easy read guide to the Corporate Plan and Annual Report (combined) be produced and be made widely available;**

    e) **An operational Plan for 2005 /06 to be brought back to the Board for approval in March/April together with proposals for reporting back to the Board on Plan delivery.**

17. Action:

    a) Chief Executive to send the draft Plan to the Scottish Executive for approval;

    b) An easy read guide to the Corporate Plan and Annual Report to be produced and made widely available as soon as possible;

    c) Operational Plan for 2005/06 to be brought back to the Board for approval March/April together with proposals for reporting back on Plan delivery.

AOCB

18. None

Date of Next Meeting

19. 11th March, Newtonmore Village Hall.