

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING IN THE PARK

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Purpose

To outline the existing support that the CNPA gives to skills development and training within the National Park, and propose a package of clear principles against which to deliver outcomes in the new National Park Partnership Plan.

Recommendations

That the Board:

- a) Takes note of the considerable work that has already been carried out in relation to skills development and training.
- b) Agrees the proposed changes in focus in relation to **young people** and support for **Land Based Businesses**.
- c) Agrees to the proposed set of principles to deliver support in skills development and training going forward.

Executive Summary

Skills development and training is a priority area of work to emerge from the National Park Partnership Plan and is key in delivering a sustainable economy supporting thriving businesses and communities looking with a particular focus on young people and land managers.

On the back of the down turn of the global economy there has been seismic change in what is being delivered in this area both nationally and on a local level. It is important for the Cairngorms National Park Authority to respond to very clear political drivers by reviewing its position in how it supports these key groups. This paper outlines what the CNPA is currently supporting, what the drivers for change are and what it should consider as a set of principles in moving forward.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING IN THE PARK FOR DECISION

Background

Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan

1. The National Park Partnership Plan has identified a “*sustainable economy supporting thriving businesses and communities*” as one of its main strategic objectives and skills development and training as a key activity in delivering this objective. The stated long term outcome highlighted in the Park Partnership Plan is:
*“There will be **more jobs and a wider range of employment opportunities** for people in the National Park. People will be able to develop their skills from school onwards to meet their own and business needs”*
2. The Park Partnership Plan clearly outlines its ambition to support this area of work through a specific package of work:
“Many different organisations provide training, support and advice for business in and around the Park. This work package is about helping make sure that training, support and advice is tailored to the needs of businesses in the Park wherever possible, and particularly to provide focus on youth training and development through rural and wider business skills apprenticeships leading to employment within the Park

What the CNPA has done already: the success story of the Land Management Training Project and other examples of CNPA support.

3. There are already a wide range of activities that the CNPA supports in the skills development and Training sector. Historically much of the support has been provided through the Land Management Training Project. (Land Based Business Training Project as was) The project has been hugely successful since its inception in a number of ways:
 - a) Over 4,000 people have received training through the project (since 2004) on a wide range of topics many closely aligned to delivering the aims of the National Park.
 - b) The project has worked with 600 land based businesses to increase their effectiveness and economic impact.
 - c) The project has created first class networking opportunities for a range of different land based interests, and has created a forum for key issues relating to the National Park to be addressed (e.g. Hill tracks, renewable energy, planning, tick control etc)

4. The CNPA also supports a number of other training initiatives that include:
- a) **COAT training projects.** First round of training through the Mountain Heritage Project (SVQ 2 accredited in Path Works) saw all eight of its participants in employment after completion. Two of whom have set up their own companies operating in the National Park. A new project (2012-2015) offers an equivalent qualification in countryside skills and aims to take 18 people through a similar process with hopefully a high employment uptake at the end of it.
 - b) **The Cairngorms Construction project (18-25)** .In its second year has already taken 22 young people through a years training linked to building and construction. Three are in apprenticeships with 11 continuing their learning journeys (college, placements etc)
 - c) **Banardos “Get into national Parks” (18-24 more excluded young people)** Three year project (2009-2012) taking 20 young people (with higher support needs) through a training programme delivering a range of rural skills. 15 of the young people now in employment.

*For further information on current support for skills development and training see Annex I.

The Future

Focussing on Young People and Land Based Businesses

5. When considering what the CNPA should bring a particular focus to in regards to skills development and training two groups stand out as requiring an enhanced emphasis: young people and the land management sector.

Young People

6. The current economic climate and the pressures that brings, means that youth employment is a significant national/international issue. Within the Cairngorms National Park this is particularly true due to the fragile rural economy with a strong dependency on employment in tourism and land based business. These sectors are often low wage and seasonal in an area where the cost of living is higher than average (e.g. fuel, housing and food prices)
7. *“In times of recession youth unemployment tends to rise quickly and takes time to return to previous rates. The downturn following the global credit crunch of 2008 has been no exception. Indeed the impacts on young people’s employment prospects since 2008 have been acute across many developed economies”.*
Scottish Government Youth Employment Strategy 2012
8. The economy relies on a growth in population and a mixed/balanced demographic profile in the Park. In the National Park Partnership Plan main challenges are:

- a) *Slow down migration out of the Park by providing more/better opportunities to train and develop knowledge and skills in the area (most young people leave looking for higher education & work because they cannot afford to live in the Park due to a combination of low wages, poor job opportunities and the high cost of living) and*
 - b) *Attract workers to come or return to the Park by providing opportunities to work and live in the Park that are affordable and attractive.*
9. There is a key need to provide practical support for younger people especially to retain skills and knowledge in the traditional land management sectors which may otherwise be lost when the older generation retires(e.g. farming and forestry) and to develop new skills and knowledge in emerging markets (e.g. renewables and ICT)

Land Based Businesses: Support for Land Managers

10. The National Park Partnership Plan clearly states an ongoing commitment to support Land Managers. Indeed one of the key underpinning principles of the Park Partnership Plan is:
- Valued by Many, managed by few** – *The role of land managers with direct responsibility for conserving and enhancing the special qualities should be recognised, supported and communicated. Conserving and enhancing the special qualities needs active management.*
11. Skills development and training support has contributed to land managers becoming more effective, profitable and providing opportunities for networking and diversification that have been invaluable. The commitment is to ensure that this support continues as part of the broader support given to this important sector.

Key drivers for reviewing the CNPA Approach to skills development and training

12. More emphasis has been placed on training and skills development by the Scottish Government. Skills development (in particular apprenticeships) and training are seen as a key support mechanism for ensuring that young people in particular have a fighting chance in the jobs market.
13. Consequently much of the existing service delivered by the Land Management Training Project has been mainstreamed by other training providers, an indication of its past success. Specifically, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) through their “Flexible Training Opportunities” programme which duplicates much of the current projects activity. SDS has significant resources and is providing a higher intervention rate as well as an increased profile that has made the LMTP less competitive in an increasing competitive market.

14. However maintaining support for Land Managers through training should still be a key priority for the CNPA. Other suppliers are often better at delivering certain aspects of skills development, while there are certain areas that the CNPA is best placed to deliver: “Bespoke” public benefit courses that have been developed by CNPA officers for the Land based sector have proved to be popular. (Deer stalking, mole control, etc) In addition, it is key that the CNPA focuses its efforts and resources to have the biggest impact to deliver National Park Partnership Plan.
15. There is a need to review the Land Management Training Project so that it provides a more complimentary service alongside that being provided by others:

Framework for change. Where the CNPA and partners can make a difference:

16. For the CNPA it is crucial that we genuinely add value to support for skills development and training and link it to the long term outcomes of the National Park Partnership Plan. Below is a list of key principles that the CNPA should consider in going forward:

What is the Role of the CNPA?

17. There is an increasingly cluttered landscape of organisations delivering skills development and training in the National Park. There is a need for a clear co-ordinating role ensuring that training and skills development is delivered in a way that makes efficient use of these resources and supports the short term and long term objectives outlined in the Park Partnership Plan. As a first step the CNPA should lead on scoping exactly what training is out there and what it is delivering for young people and land managers. To identify key partners working with these groups and ensure that collectively we are delivering a joined up cohesive programme of training support.

Mapping out what's out there already

18. We need to conduct a piece of work to identify:
 - a) What is out there already?
 - b) Who is delivering it?
 - c) Where are the training gaps?
 - d) How can the CNPA support businesses within the park (including Land Based businesses) to provide apprenticeships/training placements for young people?
 - e) Where are the potential funding sources and partnerships?
 - f) How does the CNPA add value to national initiatives: Skills Development Scotland etc?
19. Subject to the findings of this work, we propose the following principles should guide how the CNPA supports training and skills development.

Maintaining the elements of Land Management Training Project by delivering Public Benefit Courses:

20. The public benefits courses are still delivering excellent targeted support for Land Managers helping these key partners to contribute to the Parks aims. Currently there is a programme of courses extending into the autumn. It is important to maintain these established relationships and effectively promote the broader range of work the CNPA does to support them.

Signposting and promoting training that is being delivered by other partners in the Park

21. There is a considerable amount of training being delivered through the Park much of which now duplicates what was once being delivered through the LMTP. The project has developed over years a good relationship with Land Managers and should support the sector with information about training opportunities.

Continued support for training Projects led by others

22. As previously highlighted the CNPA supports a number of skills development and training partnership with LEADER, ESF and other funding bodies. (See annex I) The CNPA would look to extend to support these best practice initiatives particularly those that can demonstrate young people finding employment.
23. There are also clear overlaps with this area of work and the Cairngorms Business Partnership, it is important that we ensure a joined up approach with the CBP potentially through the proposed economic forum.

Links between Skills Development and training volunteering:

24. Volunteering has also been highlighted in the National Park Partnership Plan. This also is a mechanism that increases skills, and confidence and potentially creates links between young people and potential employment opportunities.

Internships:

25. Currently the CNPA is considering the possibility of establishing its own internships. Potentially the CNPA is looking to take on a young graduate from within the National Park to gain some work experience as a researcher providing support to various streams of work in intelligence gathering and interpretation, under the direction and mentoring of a member of the Management Team. The “mapping out” exercise outlined in paragraph 17 would be an ideal opportunity to show this.

Next Steps

26. Most crucial is to collect the relevant data to establish a good base line of information for developing a more detailed action plan. Through the “mapping exercise” but by also encouraging our partners to evaluate the key projects that they

have delivered to date: identifying successes, opportunities and areas for improvement.

Costings and resources needed to deliver new programme

27. Costing for this area of work is already built into the new corporate plan. As the detail of the work package emerges we will submit the appropriate papers to the CNPA Finance Committee.

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