
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING held at Grant Arms Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey on Friday 11th May 2012 at 10.30am

PRESENT

Peter Argyle	Ian MacKintosh
Duncan Bryden	Willie McKenna
Angela Douglas	Martin Price
Jaci Douglas	Gordon Riddler
Katrina Farquhar	Gregor Rimell
Marcus Humphrey	Brian Wood (in the Chair)
Gregor Hutcheon	Allan Wright
Eleanor Mackintosh	

In Attendance:

David Cameron	Andy Rinning
Murray Ferguson	Claire Ross
Bob Grant	Hamish Trench
Jane Hope	Francoise van Buuren
Gavin Miles	

Apologies:

Dave Fallows	Kate Howie
David Green (Convener)	Mary McCafferty

Welcome and Introduction

1. Brian Wood welcomed everyone to the Board meeting and offered congratulations to all of those who had been successful in the Council elections whether current members of the CNPA Board or not. He added for clarification that all current members of the CNPA Board who were currently Council nominations, were appointed until the 30th September. Between now and then Councils would be asked

to consider who they wished to nominate to the Scottish Government and any changes would take effect on the 1st October.

Minutes of Last Meeting – approval

2. The minutes of the meeting of the 16th March were approved with no changes.

Matters Arising

3. None.

Declarations of Interest

4. Marcus Humphrey and Gregor Hutcheon both declared a direct interest in Paper 4 as Directors of the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust. David Cameron also noted that he was a Director of COAT but was acting only in an advisory capacity in the CNPA discussion.

Notification of Election of Convener (Paper 1)

5. Jane Hope introduced the paper which gave members advance notice of the process and timetable for the election of the next Convener at the Board meeting on the 6th July. The paper was noted with no further discussion.

National Park Partnership Plan 2012/17 – Approval for Submission to Ministers (Paper 2)

6. Gavin Miles introduced the paper which sought the approval of the Board to submit the National Park Partnership Plan 2012-17 to Scottish Ministers. The process of preparing the Plan had started in mid-2010 and involved extensive consultation and discussion. The aim had been to make the Plan succinct so that it was easy for Partners to use as a focus for their work over the next five years. The Plan was being styled the “National Park Partnership Plan” to reflect the contributions and commitments by all those who had taken part in developing the Plan and who would be helping to deliver it. The Board were being asked to give their final approval to indicate they were satisfied with the process, the content and the supporting assessments, prior to submission to Scottish Ministers whose statutory approval was required.
7. In discussion a few suggestions for minor editorial changes were noted. All those involved in the preparation of the Plan were thanked.

8. **The Board approved the National Park Partnership Plan 2012-17 for submission to Scottish Ministers.**

CNPA Corporate Plan 2012-15 (Paper 3)

9. Jane Hope introduced the paper on behalf of the Management Team. The draft Corporate Plan showed how the CNPA proposed to deploy its resources over the next three years, continuing to work across a range of issues – the economy, the environment, and community – delivering sustainable development through eight programmes of work. As a small organisation the CNPA did not have large amounts of capital to invest, but was able to “punch above its weight” by continuing to concentrate on leveraging in effort and funding, bringing partnerships together and bringing funds into the Park. The work proposed would make a contribution, along with that of many other partners, to the new Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan.
10. In discussion the following points were made:
 - a) Some editorial changes;
 - b) Board Members were aware of the continuing need to review their own Board running costs;
 - c) The focus on Planning through Programme 8 was welcomed;
 - d) Broadband continued to be an extremely important issue for the National Park and there needed to be some discussion as to how the CNPA could best play a role in this given it had very limited capital;
 - e) The work of Inclusive Cairngorms was noted which cut across many of the Programmes;
 - f) The importance of Programme 3 and the need to have a strong relationship of mutual support with the land management community was noted;
 - g) The new Communications and Engagement Strategy set the framework for this and other relationships all of which were important. Board members and staff (notably Management Team) had an important role to play in this respect.
 - h) The Finance Committee had considered the budget at its meeting earlier in the day. The Committee were content with the financial projections and acknowledged the difficulties caused by a decrease in funding and an increase in costs. The draft budgets showed an excess of proposed expenditure over income in years two and three, but it was recognised that this was due to uncertainty over the levels of additional project funding that might be secured in these years. It remained important to reflect the CNPA’s levels of ambition and continue to provide an incentive to work at leveraging in additional income. There was also the potential for Government budget revisions in-year and it was important that the CNPA had “shovel ready” projects in order to be able to respond. All of this clearly meant the CNPA had to adopt a sensible and well-managed approach to the management of the risks associated with this

budgeting approach. But it was only with this boldness of approach that good things would be achieved for the National Park. The CNPA would continue to manage its finances responsibly and not spend more money than it had available.

11. The Board approved the recommendations of the paper as follows:

- a) **Agreed the proposed 8 Programmes;**
- b) **Approved the allocation of funds across those programmes.**

Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust – Contributions to the 2012/15 Business Plan (Paper 4)

Marcus Humphrey and Gregor Hutcheon left the room.

12. Bob Grant introduced the paper which provided a brief summary of works that had been delivered by the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT) over the last two years, and sought approval of a contribution to the remaining elements of the COAT Business Plan which ran to March 2015. The COAT was now entering its 5th year of operation and over that time had increased both the amount of work undertaken each year and the level of funding that had been attracted in from external sources. As a result the amount of funding that the CNPA had paid as a percentage of overall costs had reduced from 44% to 20% showing genuine buy-in from a broad spectrum of partners. The availability of funding over the course of the next Corporate plan had reduced and this was reflected in a significant reduction in grants being proposed for the work of the COAT. Nevertheless, the funding would enable the Trust to deliver the key elements of work identified in the National Park Partnership Plan but also recognised the need to manage partner expectations in what can realistically be achieved by March 2015.
13. In discussion the following points were made:
- a) There was little question over year one but the question was raised whether years 2 and 3 should be agreement in principle. Against this was the need to give COAT certainty in order to be able to lever in other funds.
 - b) It would be helpful to add the condition that COAT made a presentation to the Board once a year.
 - c) COAT's work was integral to the National Park. It was important for them to focus on wider outcomes (eg usage of partners) and not just the building of the paths themselves.
 - d) COAT was a lean operation. It was important to ensure they were working well alongside others such as rangers who could collect information on how paths were being used, given that COAT itself did not have the capacity to do this.
 - e) There was some debate about work on low ground versus work on high ground. More people probably took recreation on low ground and therefore perhaps

emphasis should be placed there. COAT was aware of this; nevertheless the upland programme had been put in place, had attracted considerable funding, and now had to run its course. There was an agreement with COAT that if it could get more funding for low ground work this would be its next priority.

- f) The potential extension of the Speyside Way was noted as a huge cost which could be difficult to justify in the current climate. It was acknowledged as a big challenge to raise the necessary funds. Nevertheless the extension of the path was a good fit with what the CNPA was trying to do more widely, quite aside from the fact of it being a long distance route. Given the funding challenges it may have to be delivered on a longer timescale than had been originally been envisaged.

14. The Board agreed the recommendations of the paper as follows:

- a) **Noted the programme of works delivered to date;**
- b) **Approved the overall funding of £590,000 over three years to the work of the Trust.**

Marcus Humphrey and Gregor Hutcheon returned to the meeting.

Skills Development and Training in the Park (Paper 5)

15. Claire Ross introduced the paper which outlined the existing support that the CNPA gave to skills development and training within the National Park, and proposed a package of clear principles against which to deliver outcomes in the new National Park Partnership Plan. In discussion the following points were made:

- a) This was a complex area requiring development of soft skills as well as hard skills if the end result was to be employment. There were potential barriers to developing skills which also needed to be addressed (for example lack of transport).
- b) Businesses needed to be primed to take young people once trained.
- c) Businesses should be involved to activate this; should the proposals in the paper be a joint initiative with the Cairngorms Business Partnership?
- d) As the important point was creating jobs, it was logical to look at where jobs would come from. Growth would come from new businesses setting up and therefore skills of entrepreneurship were important and this was what needed to be facilitated. It was important to take a step back and review how we achieved new jobs, not just up-skilling.
- e) There was some debate about what was the appropriate role for the CNPA in skills development, given the role of Local Authorities, Business Gateway, and Skills Development Scotland. This was an important consideration; the first step was to complete the proposed work at Paragraph 18 on mapping out what was already there. There would then need to be a further discussion about the role of the CNPA.

16. **The Board agreed the proposal at Paragraph 18 that a piece of work should be conducted to identify what was already available in respect of skills development and training in the Park so that the Board could have a further discussion on the role of the CNPA in contributing to what was clearly a very important need in the National Park.**

Flood Risk Management Act – Consultation on Responsible Authorities (Paper 6)

17. Hamish Trench introduced the paper which sought the Board's response to the recommendation by the Scottish Government to designate the National Park Authority as a responsible authority in terms of the Flood Risk Management Act. Designation would bring statutory duties to the CNPA, the practical implication of which was likely to be some additional officer time to participate in local partnerships to develop Flood Risk Management Plans.
18. **The Board agreed the recommendations of the paper as follows:**
- a) **Accepted the case for designating the Cairngorms National Park Authority as a responsible authority under the Flood Risk Management Act; and**
 - b) **Delegated to officers the CNPA's response to the consultation, to include the implications for CNPA with sign-off by Convener, Deputy, and Planning Convener.**

National Park Plan Final 4-Monthly Progress Report 11 (Paper 7) Corporate Plan Monitoring (Paper 8)

19. The above two papers were for information and were noted without comment.

AOCB

20. As Chair of the Finance Committee, Eleanor Mackintosh noted that while Mary McCafferty was ill, a replacement was needed on the Finance Committee. Allan Wright offered and was agreed by the Board as a temporary replacement.
21. Jane Hope announced her intention to stand down as Chief Executive after nearly ten years in the job. She confirmed that she would stay until a new Chief Executive was in post which was unlikely to be much before the end of the calendar year.

Date of Next Meeting:

22. Next formal meeting Friday 6th July, 2012, Albert Hall, Ballater.