
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: Stakeholder Engagement Programme 2008/09

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Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to gain agreement on what role the Board can play to support the Stakeholder Engagement programme put in place for 2008/09, to agree the core communication themes we want to put across to our target audiences and to agree the objectives for the opinion poll survey to be carried out during 2008/09.

Recommendations

The Board is asked to agree:

- a) The role the Board can play to support the Stakeholder Engagement programme for 2008/09 set out on pages 2-3.
- b) The core communication themes we want to put across to our target audiences set out on pages 3-5.
- c) The objectives for the opinion poll survey previously agreed to be carried out in 2008/09 set out on pages 5-6.

Executive Summary

Stakeholder engagement and communications is critical if we are to lead and co-ordinate the collective delivery of the National Park Plan. The Board can play a vital leadership role which will help to raise understanding and support for the Park, the Park Plan and the role of the Park Authority. This paper sets out proposals for what that leadership role should be and what communication themes we should use to influence people's views about the Park and Park Authority. It also sets out proposed timing and objectives for an opinion poll survey with our key stakeholders. This paper focuses on what the CNPA as a corporate organisation wants to communicate with our key stakeholders and partners and does not focus on general messages to promote the National Park to potential visitors and the general public. This work is covered separately by our marketing and interpretation work through the delivery of the National Park Plan priority for action – to raise awareness and understanding of the Park.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME 2008/09 FOR DECISION

Background

1. The Cairngorms National Park Authority is five years old. Since 2003 we have established the organisation, put strategic plans and policies in place and developed good partner relationships. With the National Park Plan in place, we are now concentrating on co-ordinating the delivery of the priorities for action and monitoring and reporting on progress against the plan. The first annual progress report has been produced and will be distributed to interested parties later this month. Our Corporate Plan 2008-2011 has also been approved which clearly sets out what the CNPA will deliver both in terms of supporting the National Park Plan and the Scottish Government's National Strategic Framework.
2. As we move into this new phase, effective partnership working is critical to our success. Work has already started to consider how the organisation can refresh and rejuvenate our approach. '*Looking Ahead: The Next Three Years*', discussed on 16th May at the Board meeting in Glen Clova, identified a number of actions which includes looking at the leadership role the Board can play in relation to our stakeholder engagement work to strengthen our partnerships and get some agreed core communication themes across to our target audiences. This paper sets out proposals for what that leadership role and core communication themes should be for Board agreement.

Role for the Board

3. CNPA Board members clearly play a significant role in helping to raise the profile of the Park and what makes it special, clarify the role of the CNPA and explain what we and our partners aim to achieve through the delivery of the National Park Plan. This is an invaluable role whether it is done formally as hosts or speakers at conferences and events or informally when meeting members of the public at community meetings or local gatherings. Following the Board training day in January 2008 and subsequent informal discussion in March, it was agreed that the Board should support these communication objectives by influencing others through their network of people and organisations. To help Board members provide this support for the stakeholder engagement programme it is proposed:
 - a) Named Board members should attend advisory forums so that they can listen to the views expressed by stakeholders and provide feedback at Board meetings so these views can be taken into account when decisions are being made. This role will demonstrate the Board's commitment to meet with, listen and

respond to people's views and concerns. Other Board members will also be welcome to attend on an ad hoc basis.

- b) Board members should support senior members of staff who are responsible for providing a stakeholder 'account manager' role with our key partners (see Annex 1). This support role will vary depending on individual situations and to ensure a consistent approach will be co-ordinated by the Convener and Chief Executive. It will also demonstrate our commitment to effective partnership working which is flexible and meets our customers' needs.
 - c) Board members should attend events & shows where the CNPA has a presence (e.g. Royal Highland Show). This role will increase the accessibility and raise the profile of individual Board members and provide an opportunity for them to network and build stronger relationships with our target audiences.
 - d) Locally elected members should attend the pre-board meetings in their area (or what ever replacement is proposed following the review led by Jaci Douglas) as well as local community council meetings and other community based events. This role will increase the accessibility and raise the profile of locally elected Board members within their communities so that they can accurately reflect local views and concerns raised by the communities they represent at Board and Committee meetings when decisions are being made.
 - e) Board members may also be asked to provide specialist support for specific briefings, events or conferences by the Convener or Chief Executive to help address particular issues or audiences.
4. To provide adequate support for board members a quarterly briefing note confirms our 'line to take' on issues that may be raised. A 'Forward Look' will also be produced so that everyone is aware of what 'stakeholder engagement' activities are taking place. Board members are encouraged to seek briefing information in advance of any events they may be involved with and to report back on any discussions at Board meetings or via the named CNPA 'account manager'.

Recommendation

5. **That the Board agrees the proposed role Board members should play to support our stakeholder engagement programme for 2008/09.**

Core Communication Themes

6. This paper focuses on what the CNPA as a corporate organisation wants to communicate with our key stakeholders and partners and does not cover any general messages to promote the Park to potential visitors and the general public. The stakeholder engagement strategy

concentrates on influencing people who either are critical to the delivery of the Park Plan or key influencers and conduits in terms of information. (see Annex 2 for a summary of the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy agreed by the Board in August 2007.)

7. To influence opinions and beliefs people need to receive simple, consistent and meaningful messages from a variety of sources. If messages are delivered by a third party, particularly one that is known, trusted and respected this will make an even greater impact. These opinions and beliefs are subsequently confirmed (or not) through direct personal experience. Consequently, if we want to influence people's views about the Cairngorms National Park and Park Authority we need to be clear what opinions and beliefs we want them to have and create a series of core communication themes that we want to get across to our target audiences. To get these themes across we can use a number of tailored messages which will vary depending on who we are engaging with so that they are meaningful and relevant. The themes represent an impression or idea and not the actual words to be used.

Theme 1: The Cairngorms National Park is a special place and is the pride of Scotland

8. Some examples of messages we may want to use with our stakeholders are:
 - a) Scotland's National Parks care for some of our best natural and cultural heritage, they are exemplars in sustainable development and promote the health, well-being, education and enjoyment of people who visit, work and live in the Park – they are the jewels in Scotland's crown and are the responsibility of everybody working together not just the CNPA.
 - b) The Cairngorms National Park is unlike anywhere else in Britain. It is a unique mosaic of habitats of very high quality and exceptional size and scale. It is a strong hold for British wildlife, including many of the UK's rare and endangered species, and those at the limit of their range. By working in partnership, land managers, NGOs and the public sector are leading the way in managing habitat networks to protect biodiversity on a landscape scale.
 - c) The huge granite hills are some of the oldest rock formations in the world. The Cairngorms hills have shaped the natural heritage, people and landscapes and culture around them and create a sense of wildness and space at its heart. The Park has some of the most accessible 'wild land' in Europe and inspires passion in people who live and visit this special place.
 - d) The Park is a cultural landscape where different areas have their own sense of identity and cultural traditions, but each is linked by their ties to the environment. People have lived in the

Cairngorms for thousands of years and their activities have and continue to impact and shape the physical and cultural character of the Park and national identity of Scotland.

- e) The Park offers some of the best outdoor activity opportunities in Scotland and has more home-grown 'Olympians' per head of population than anywhere else in the world. People are inspired to enjoy the outdoors and get active and the Cairngorms has an international reputation which attracts thousands of visitors to Scotland every year.

Theme 2: The National Park Authority is a professional, respected and trusted organisation that adds value

- 9. Examples of core messages we may want to use with our stakeholders are:
 - a) The CNPA's core values are to be an open, trustworthy and fair organisation which strives to be helpful, professional and behave with integrity at all times.
 - b) The CNPA aims to be an inclusive organisation that genuinely wants to communicate, listen and involve people with an interest in the Park – a guiding principle that cuts across everything the Park Authority does is to encourage people to participate in the Park by operating in an open, transparent and accessible environment and to create a 'Park for All'.
 - c) The CNPA is an organisation that is responsible for leading and co-ordinating the delivery of the Park aims through the National Park Plan and aspires to be at the cutting edge of academic and policy thinking on governance, engagement and sustainable development.
 - d) The CNPA supports and adds value to a range of activities and provides innovative and strategic solutions to help our partners achieve agreed priorities – for example the Park Brand helps local business create a strong identity for the Park which raises quality and environmental standards.
 - e) The CNPA provides information on the state of the Park so that strategic management decisions can be made on an informed basis by all those involved in the management of the Park.

Theme 3: The Park Authority and its partners, through the delivery of the Park Plan, will make a valued contribution over the next 3-5 years

- 10. Examples of core messages we may want to use with our stakeholders are:
 - a) The National Park Plan prepared by the CNPA in partnership with other interested parties, provides a strategic framework for the management of the Park that is aligned to the Scottish Government Outcomes and focuses the collective efforts of all partners to deliver agreed priorities by 2012.

- b) The collective delivery of the National Park Plan by all its partners is an example of best practice in sustainable rural development involving the public, private and voluntary sectors which will make a significant contribution to delivering the Scottish Government's strategic outcomes
- c) The CNPA and the four local authorities are responsible for delivering a planning & development management service to achieve sustainable economic growth that balances the needs of people living, working and enjoying the Park with the need to conserve and enhance its natural and cultural resources for future generations to enjoy.

Recommendation

11. **The Board are asked to agree our stakeholder engagement programme should focus on the above communication themes so that support materials can be prepared for use by staff and Board members.**

Opinion Poll Survey

12. It was agreed that an opinion poll survey should be carried out during 2008/09 which would build on the survey carried out in 2005 to establish whether our communication efforts have had an impact and what issues may need to be addressed in future. As the strategic review is currently underway we have contacted the Scottish Executive to ask whether the objectives and timing of this survey could support their review processes. Subject to the response we receive it is proposed that the opinion poll should be carried out in the autumn/winter 2008/09 and that it should focus on the following objectives:
 - a) Identify what our key partners views are in relation to the Park and Park Authority and in particular their level of commitment to delivering the NPP.
 - b) Identify what our key partners views are in relation to the future potential for the Park and how they feel the CNPA has/can best deliver its 'enabling' role.
 - c) Ask specifically if our key partners feel the CNPA is a professional, respected and trusted organisation that listens and responds to its 'stakeholders'.
13. It is proposed that the research should be carried out using similar methodology as previously involving focus group discussions and one to one interviews. In addition, an electronic questionnaire could be used with a 'leadership panel' which would allow ongoing soundings to be taken on how well we are engaging with our stakeholders and whether we are increasing their level of awareness, understanding and support for the delivery of the NPP. This work will complement the

research being carried out by the Macaulay Institute which focuses specifically on effective partnership working.

Recommendation

- 14. The Board are asked to agree that the Opinion Poll work should commence during the Autumn/Winter 2008/09 and should focus on the objectives outlined above subject to the response received by the Scottish Executive in relation to potential linkages with the strategic review of National Parks in Scotland.**

Consultation

15. This paper builds on the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy Paper which was approved by the Board in August 2007 and informal discussions held with the Board in January, March and May of this Year. Further consultation has been carried out with the Convener, Chief Executive and management team and references have been made to the previous opinion poll work and ongoing Macaulay Institute research project which reflect the views of our key stakeholder groups as well as the Interpretation framework and user guide currently being prepared for the Park.

Policy Context

16. The Stakeholder Engagement Programme aims to raise understanding and gain support for the Cairngorms National Park and its four aims, the delivery of the National Park Plan and Scottish Government's strategic outcomes, and the role of the Cairngorms National Park Authority. It focuses on building stronger working relationships with our key partners to provide a better customer service and improve the way that we work together. In addition it aims to encourage our partners to act as ambassadors for the Park in order to reach as wide an audience and gain as much support and understanding for the Park as possible.

Implications

Financial Implications

17. The proposed stakeholder engagement programme can be delivered within the available budget allocated in the Operational Plan 2008/09. £10,000 has been allocated to carry out the opinion poll survey which is less than the research budget spent in 2005, however, it is anticipated that a more focused survey will help keep costs down. If the Scottish Executive would like us to extend the focus to include additional research objectives this may need additional funding.

Presentational Implications

18. It is anticipated that the stakeholder engagement programme and opinion poll survey will support and provide valuable information that will improve the effectiveness of the CNPA and the successful delivery of the National Park Plan. A co-ordinated approach to communications should help increase general understanding and support for the Park and the role of the CNPA. Hopefully the opinion poll findings will also support the strategic review and help to identify how the CNPA can be made more effective in delivering its statutory duties. A summary of the communication mechanisms currently in place to support the stakeholder engagement programme is attached in Annex 3.

Implications for Stakeholders

19. The stakeholder engagement programme will allow us to be more customer-focused, improve the way that we work with our partners and provide a better customer service.

Next Steps

20. If the Board agree to the proposed core messages support materials will be produced for board and staff to use with their 'engagement' activities by September 2008. The opinion poll will be carried out over the next 6 months and if possible will feed into the strategic review process. A report on the findings with recommendations will be presented to the Board before the end of this financial year so that it can feed into the Stakeholder Engagement programme 2009/10. Quarterly updates will be produced for the Board which will confirm what activities are planned for the months ahead and what support Board members will be expected to provide.

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11th July 2008

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ANNEX 1 - KEY STAKEHOLDER GROUPS & CNPA 'ACCOUNT MANAGERS'

Public Sector	Partner contact	CNPA contact
Aberdeenshire Council	Les Allan	Jane Hope
Angus Council	Bill Strachan	Jane Hope
Highland Council	William Gillfillan	Jane Hope
Moray Council	Bob Stewart	Jane Hope
Perthshire Council	tbc	Jane Hope
Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)	Campbell Gemmell	Don McKee
Scottish Water	Archie MacGregor	Don McKee
Scottish Natural Heritage	Susan Davis/Debbie G.	Hamish Trench
Forestry Commission (FCS)	Bob Dunsmore	Hamish Trench
Deer Commission (DCS)	Nick Halfhide	Hamish Trench
Crofters Commission	Nick Reiter	Hamish Trench
Bòrd na Gàidhlig	Peadar Morgan	Francoise van Buuren
Historic Scotland	Aonghus MacKechnie	Hamish Trench
Sport Scotland	Tim Walker	Murray Ferguson
VisitScotland	Riddell Graham	Murray Ferguson
Highlands & Islands Enterprise (HIE)	James Gibbs	Andrew Harper
Scottish Enterprise (Grampian&Tayside)	Russell Stevenson & Julian Pace	Andrew Harper
University Highlands & Islands (UHI)	Martin Price	Gavin Miles
Macaulay Institute	Kirsty Blackstock	Gavin Miles
Scottish Environment and Rural Services (SEARs)	Peter Russell	David Cameron
Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority	Mike Cantlay & Fiona Logan	Jane Hope
Association of National Park Authorities (ANPA)	Cathryn Marcus	Jane Hope
Scottish Council for National Parks	Robert Maund	Jane Hope
Scottish Government	Ian Hooper	Jane Hope/D Cameron
Minister's Office	Scott Sutherland	Jane Hope/F van Buuren
Local Businesses	Point of contact	CNPA Contact
Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce (CCC)	Duncan MacKellar	Andrew Harper
Aviemore Destination Management Organisation (ACDMO)	Alan Rankin	Andrew Harper
Deeside Destination	Claire Bruce	Andrew Harper

Management Organisation		
Tomintoul & Glenlivet Highland Holidays	Dave Newland	Andrew Harper
Blair Atholl Business Group	Andrew Bruce-Wootton	Andrew Harper
Local Communities	Point of contact	CNPA contact
Enjoyment & Understanding Forum	Sally Dowden	Murray Ferguson
Living & Working Forum	Peter Argyll	Andrew Harper
Conserving & Enhancing Forum	Alastair MacLennan	Hamish Trench
Local Outdoor Access Forum (LOAF)	Dick Balharry	Murray Ferguson
Inclusive Cairngorms	Various	Claire Ross
Community Planning Partnerships	Various	Andrew Harper
Homes for Scotland	David Horsfall	Fiona Munro
Housing Associations	Various	Fiona Munro
Schools & Youth Groups	Various	Claire Ross
Association of Cairngorm Communities (AoCC)	Alastair Colquhoun	Claire Ross
Community Voluntary Services	various	Claire Ross
Cairngorms Local Action Group (LAG)	LEADER+ Local Action Group	Andrew Harper & Patricia Methven
Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT)	Dougie Baird	David Cameron
Land Management & Conservation Groups	Point of contact	CNPA contact
Land Managers	Various	Hamish Trench
Scottish Rural Property Business Association (SRPBA)	Doug McAdam	Hamish Trench
Scottish Environment LINK	John Mayhew	Hamish Trench
Farmers and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)	Alison McKnight	Hamish Trench
National Farmers Union Scotland (NFUS)	Johnnie Hall	Hamish Trench
Scottish Gamekeepers Association (SGA)	Alex Hogg	David Hetherington
Cairngorm, Rothiemurchus & Glenmore Group (CRAGG)	Various	Murray Ferguson
Cairngorms Campaign	Drennan Watson	Murray Ferguson
Badenoch & Strathspey Conservation Group	Gus Jones/Roy Turnbull	Hamish Trench

ANNEX 2 – SUMMARY OF THE CNPA STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

1. The Communications Strategy prepared in June 2004 by Danny Alexander, identified four principles that underpin our communication - openness, clarity, pro-activity, and responsiveness and four target audiences - local people; opinion formers; the people of Scotland; and visitors and potential visitors to the area. Our objective has been to develop our reputation as an 'enabling' organisation that is trusted and respected and to keep people informed about our work through our communications activity. In early 2005 an opinion poll survey with local residents (29 people) and local opinion formers (15 people) gave a benchmark of what local people's views were of the Park and Park Authority. It also identified that our communication efforts should focus on demonstrating the CNPA is a responsive & listening organisation by showing that affordable housing is a priority for the CNPA, it should promote the benefits of living in the Park to create a sense of local pride about the Park and it recognises the importance of young people in the Park. It also identified that it is important to demonstrate how the CNPA was making an impact by delivering on its aims and that CNPA staff themselves understood the role of the CNPA as a listening and enabling organization. Finally, it recognised that it would take some time before the organisation could expect to be 'respected and trusted'.
2. In January 2007 further work refined the target audiences to help prioritise our activities by focusing on – local communities; local businesses; land managers within the Park; and our public sector partners. In addition, work would need to focus on national and local opinion formers including politicians, NGOs and the media. It was agreed that these target audiences all play a vital role in helping us deliver the National Park Plan and the aims of the National Park. Effective communication will help to ensure all partners and interested parties understand why there is a Cairngorms National Park, what makes it so special and what needs to be done to protect and promote the Park for the benefit and enjoyment of everyone. It is essential that partners understand and support the Park aims and Priorities for Action set out in the National Park Plan and are aware of their role and contribution to achieve them. A Stakeholder Engagement Strategy approved by the Board in August 2007 sets out how we will achieve this objective and an opinion poll to be carried out during 2008/09 will measure the effectiveness of our activities since 2005.
3. The communication objectives agreed were to:
 - a) Demonstrate the value National Parks offer Scotland as a whole and how the CNPA and its partners help to achieve the Park aims;

- b) Generate and maintain enthusiasm and support for the Cairngorms National Park both within and outwith the Park Boundary;
 - c) Encourage and assist key stakeholders to act as ambassadors and to communicate accurate and helpful information about the Park.
4. To be effective and make best use of our limited resources it was also agreed our communications should focus on those individuals and groups who either are critical to the successful delivery of the National Park Plan, or key influencers and conduits in terms of information. The aim is to communicate through others by creating ambassadors who champion the Park and act as information intermediaries who pass on information that is accurate and correct any misinformation about the Park.

ANNEX 3 - EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION MECHANISMS

1. In order to deliver the Stakeholder engagement programme, a number of external communication mechanisms have been put in place:
 - a) External working groups, delivery teams & advisory forums – to encourage and build on partnership working and use partners as information intermediaries as much as possible.
 - b) Regular face to face update briefings – an ‘account manager’ system for dealing with our key partners and larger and more complex organisations is proposed to ensure there is a more customer focused and consistent approach to communications.
 - c) Ministerial & other visits to the Park - to reach identified audiences or interest groups to meet a specific communication objective with information tailored for them, rather than trying to produce information of interest to everyone.
 - d) Open evenings & community consultations – to facilitate two-way communication by developing listening mechanisms and stimulating discussion and debate. A review of how we can best engage with our local and special interest communities is being prepared for discussion with the Board in September 2008. In addition, Jaci Douglas is looking at how the Board can better engage with the general public within the Park.
 - e) Community Planning Partnerships, community needs assessments and the PDM role – to facilitate two-way communication by developing listening mechanisms and stimulating discussion and debate with the local communities and communities of special interest within the Park.
 - f) Events programme – to reach identified audiences or interest groups to meet a specific communication objective with information tailored for them, rather than trying to produce information of interest to everyone.
 - g) Training programmes, conferences and seminars – to raise awareness and understanding of the Park, encourage and assist stakeholders to act as ambassadors to communicate accurate and helpful information about the Park, utilise innovative sustainable ways to generate discussion and debate and generate a sense of pride of being part of the Cairngorms National Park.
 - h) Education & Social inclusion programmes - to lay foundations for communications in the future by working closely with children and young people to generating discussion and debate and a sense of pride of being part of the Cairngorms National Park.
 - i) Regular newsletters, publications, e-bulletins, mailings – to communicate accurate and helpful information about the Park and encourage and assist stakeholders to act as ambassadors for the Park with a wider range of audiences.
 - j) Surveys & opinion polls – to facilitate two-way communication and develop listening mechanisms. A proposed outline for an

opinion poll to be carried out during 2008 is being prepared with the sponsor division to see whether this can also support the strategic review.

- k) Media relations & PR Forum for the Park – to encourage the media and other PROs in partner organisations to raise awareness and understanding about the Park, communicate accurate and helpful information about the Park and co-ordinate communications to make best use of available skills and resources and avoid duplication.
 - l) Websites – to raise awareness and understanding about the Park, communicate accurate and helpful information about the Park, utilise innovative sustainable ways to generate discussion and debate and generate a sense of pride of being part of the Cairngorms National Park.
2. These mechanisms provide a means for both staff and Board members to reach our key stakeholders and a programme of activities has been prepared to help co-ordinate our collective efforts. Regular briefing notes are circulated which provide clear guidance on how to respond should a particular issue be raised and our key messages about the CNPA were circulated in early 2007. An updated version along with support materials (revised CNPA booklet, leaflets on SRDP & Climate Change, standard PowerPoint presentations, display materials, suite of publications promoting the park and its special qualities, interpretation guidelines etc.) are being produced and should be available in the Autumn. In addition, a quarterly 'Forward Look' will keep our staff, Board members and partners informed of our communication activities.
3. Finally, where there are specific and more complex issues that need to be addressed individual communication plans will be produced involving relevant staff and board members. During 2008 communication plans are being prepared for the Local Plan, Am Camas Mor, Aviemore Design Framework, Sustainable Design Guide and the SRPD (including LEADER) programme. Considerable work will also go into supporting and the Scottish Government's strategic review of National Parks in Scotland as well as the ongoing promotion of the National Park Plan and our collective efforts to tackle climate change.