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# CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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## FOR DECISION

**Title:** VOCATIONAL TRAINING SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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### Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to determine what the CNPA's role should be in establishing enhanced vocational training support arrangements for young people within the Park, and to agree the focus and preferred actions to deliver such enhanced support.

### Recommendations

That the Board:

- a) Note the preparatory work and research that has informed this paper.
- b) Agree the breadth of the skills base that is to be addressed.
- c) Agree to the progression of the collective package of proposed actions.

### Executive Summary

Since the previous Board paper on this initiative, in July 2005, the CNPA has received reports on three pieces of research to inform the development of the youth vocational training project. Broadly this research assessed the skills needs of local businesses and of school-leavers, determined the current provision of courses and trainers in and around the Park, and made recommendations for action.

A meeting with all key partners was held in February 2006, and six overarching recommendations were discussed. A number of potential actions to deliver these recommendations were identified and have been consulted upon. All options require close partnership working with agencies and the private sector.

The key actions which could be progressed include: the establishment of a bursary scheme to fill funding gaps for training; additional support for businesses to enable them to provide placement opportunities; working with Lantra to support vocational skills development in schools; development of a 'Park passport' scheme/Modern Apprenticeship in rural skills.

## VOCATIONAL TRAINING SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE – FOR DECISION

### Background

1. The CNPA undertook to establish a vocational training scheme within 3 years in its first Corporate Plan and this Paper outlines the way forward to deliver on that commitment.
2. This work was last considered by the Board in July 2005 when a paper entitled 'Cairngorms Youth Apprenticeship Scheme: Increasing Training Opportunities for Young People in the Park' was discussed. The Board approved the progress that had been made and the planned next steps. At that point it was intended that a subsequent paper would be brought to the Board later in the year to provide funding details on proposals emerging from the work. This paper has been delayed until now to ensure that the proposals tie in properly with the emerging Park Plan and the review of the Authority's approaches to learning and inclusion.
3. The rationale behind setting up a scheme was covered in the July Board paper, and is essentially to:
  - a) address the seasonality of jobs in the Park
  - b) help build careers based on multiple jobs and multi-skilling
  - c) provide and promote local vocational training choices
  - d) deal with barriers to businesses and trainees in vocational training
4. The aim of the project is to encourage and support young people to enable them to access better quality vocational training and achieve better careers locally; build on training provision in the Park area, and to support local businesses in workforce recruitment and training.

### Research Reports

5. The July 2005 Board Paper noted that three pieces of research were required to provide information, and these reports are now complete:

#### *Training Needs Analysis*

6. This looked at the levels of demand and interest from S4-S6 school pupils and recent school leavers in a range of employment options; and identified perceived and actual barriers facing vocational learners seeking employment within the Cairngorms National Park

#### *Training Provision and Funding*

7. This identified the current training provision available to young people and designed a training database for the storage and retrieval of this information. It also highlighted potential sources of funding for training.

**Business Skills Audit**

8. This research summarizes the views of over 200 businesses in the NP, and identifies the skills gaps, the means by which the skills base can be improved, the support required by business to achieve this and the likely business interest in involvement in a pilot Vocational Employment Scheme.
9. Full copies of the research are available and a short summary of each can be found at annex 1.1. This research is also helping to inform several other pieces of work including the recently commissioned public transport audit.

**Working with Partners and the CNPA's Role**

10. It has been clear from the outset that improved vocational training should not and cannot be delivered by CNPA alone, and the partners involved to date are listed at annex 1.2. In addition, it is vital that any proposal does not duplicate existing schemes or activities or set up qualifications or schemes that do not fit into the national framework and these are detailed in annex 1.3.
11. To date, the CNPA has played a co-ordinating role by bringing all the relevant partners together and there is a tremendous enthusiasm and commitment to tailor an action plan to cover the specific requirements of the National Park area.
12. At a workshop in early February, partners gathered to hear presentations on all three research reports and an inspiring talk by the then Head of Kingussie High School, Eddie Broadley on the Scottish Progression Awards (SPAs). This is a new award for S4-S6 which could be seen as an entry into vocational training and which will build on the existing 'Skills for Work' from S3. Some of the local partners are outlined in annex 1.4, whilst the Steering Group meetings to date are noted in annex 1.5.
13. A brain-storming session followed the presentations where partners looked at the recommendations that had arisen from the research, and discussion focussed on the priorities for the project, and the role for the CNPA and potential partners. Key actions were identified to:
  - a) Raise the profile of vocational training
  - b) Provide information on a range of learning routes
  - c) Develop opportunities for work experience placements
  - d) Coordinate training provision & funding to help meet requirements and overcome barriers to training
  - e) Strengthen education, community & business links
  - f) Build on business interest & participation
  - g) Develop a passport-style scheme to better coordinate and support existing vocational qualifications
14. The feedback and suggestions have been reworked into a set of actions for delivery which have been refined through further consultation with partners.

**Skills Focus**

15. One issue on which a steer is needed from the Board is that of the breadth of the skills base that is to be addressed. Actions could be related to employment sectors and skills training across board, or could be targeted upon a more focused range of sectors and skills. There is a mix of views as to which would be more appropriate. However, there is an argument that to maximise the contribution to the Park aims, the focus should be upon skills and employment sectors that contribute not only to the Park's fourth aim (the sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities) but also to the other aims. This would mean targeting skills relating to tourism/hospitality, land management, outdoor recreation, rangers and guides and natural and cultural heritage conservation.

### Recommendation

16. **The Board is asked to agree that any vocational training support should be focused upon those employment sectors/skills that are most closely linked to the Park's collective aims.**

### Proposed Actions

17. There are four main actions which could be delivered singularly, or in any combination as a package of support. These are set out in the table below, along with a preliminary analysis of likely costs and funding, delivery partners and duration/succession arrangements.

Action	Costs/Funding	Delivery Partners	Duration/Succession
Bursaries to assist resident young people to access training in local businesses where other support is not available.	£8K per annum from CNPA to support 12 young people. Extend if other funding secured.	Referrals to come from LECs and Careers Scotland. Option to deliver via LBBT project.	3 years initially. Evaluate in year 3 and either cease activity, continue through same mechanism or mainstream into partner activity.
Post to provide Park schools with increased awareness of vocational skills career paths and support for teachers', parents' and pupils' networks.	£40K per annum (£8K CNPA, £32K Scottish Executive).	Would be delivered via Lantra.	2 year fixed term. Will build capacity within schools for them to do this in future.
Business support to encourage and support employers in providing work placements.	Being determined. Budget for £10K CNPA funding per annum.	Options being considered.	3 years and evaluate upon completion.

Action	Costs/Funding	Delivery Partners	Duration/ Succession
Park Skills Passport (and potential MA in rural skills).	To be determined but potential to fund via partners.	Sector Skills Councils & the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Option to deliver via LBBT project.	3 years initially. Evaluate in year 3 and either cease activity, continue through same mechanism or mainstream (via MA in Rural Skills).

18. The first three actions could be progressed relatively quickly. Regarding the 4<sup>th</sup> action, the Steering Group were previously advised by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) that developing a MA in Rural Skills would take several years and that such a multi-sector qualification may be too complex a project to achieve. However, the Steering Group are still keen to see it progressed, and talks are underway with SQA to develop the qualification over the next couple of years. In the meantime, a Park Passport scheme based on existing training courses could be run in conjunction with the bursaries.
19. It is important to note that these actions are complementary in nature. They are all addressing different but related aspects of the vocational training system. The Lantra post would focus upon raising awareness among schoolchildren, teachers and parents of vocational training opportunities (not just in the land based sector). The bursaries would address barriers to young people accessing training in local businesses. The business support action would encourage and assist businesses in providing work placements. The Park Skills Passport would collate and formally recognise the range of Park related training that was undertaken by a young person. Given the positive linkages between these actions, it would almost certainly be most effective for them to be progressed as a collective package.

## Recommendation

20. **The Board is asked to consider these actions and to agree that they should be progressed as a collective package of work.**

## Policy Context

21. This project provides local support for existing apprenticeships and addresses barriers to entry for businesses and young people. It compliments the Skillseekers, New Deal, Training for Work and Modern Apprenticeships schemes. It is being developed with national partners Careers Scotland, Determined to Succeed and the Enterprise Network, and locally the Chamber of Commerce and Lantra.
22. This Board paper compliments the Scottish Executive's current initiative to lower the number of young adults (16-19) who are : "Not in Employment, Education or Training" (NEETS)

23. The work clearly fits with and is referred to within the draft Park Plan, Priority for Action - Making Tourism and Businesses Sustainable with the aim of long-term sustainability of the Park requiring a vibrant tourism and business sector that underpins the economy. However, if it is accepted that the focus should be on those employment sectors/skills that are relevant across the aims of the Park, then the actions would contribute to achieving all of the aims in a collective manner.

#### *Delivering Sustainability and a Park for All*

24. Sustainable communities need their young people to have clear options for staying and working in the local area. This project will help provide more trainee and apprenticeship placements thus improving local prospects for young people.

#### *Delivering Economy, Effectiveness and Efficiency*

25. By working with partners, CNPA can make best use of limited resources. It can effectively tackle local training issues, growing local training capacity and avoiding duplication with other providers. There is scope to use the Land Based Business Training Project to deliver the bursary provision which may be the most economical, efficient and effective way to do so.

### **Implications**

#### *Financial Implications*

26. At this stage the Board no firm financial commitment is being requested from the Board. Currently the Operational Plan makes a provision of £20,000 for 2006/07. If all four actions are to be pursued it is likely that the maximum CNPA commitment this year would be £16,000 with a maximum commitment of £30,000 in subsequent years. Funding requirements will be considered through the Authority's corporate and operational planning processes and, before any financial commitments are entered into, the appropriate level of approval will be sought in line with the Authority's scheme of delegation.
27. At this stage it is anticipated that all actions can be progressed through existing staff within the Authority.

#### *Presentational Implications*

28. By fully involving all partners the CNPA will help coordinate support which should be widely accepted by partners and the public, bringing real benefits to increased skills and pay levels. The support of local media has been sought and received through the release and use of several press releases and their assistance will continue to be sought to publicise the scheme.

#### *Implications for Stakeholders*

29. By avoiding duplication and adding to the assistance available in the Park for young people and businesses, the project will help partners meet their aims to raise skills levels of trainees and apprentices and to support local businesses. Training providers, businesses and schools will work more closely together to provide a more seamless level of support for young people.

## **Next Steps**

30. Based upon the steer received from the Board, work will continue with the Steering Group to work up the detail of the preferred actions, for consideration by funding partners. The Board will be kept informed of progress via the regular cycle of Operational Plan and Theme reports.

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