

**MINUTE of MEETING of the
NATIONAL PARK PLAN WORKING GROUP
held within the Lonach Hall, Strathdon
on 12th March 2004**

PRESENT

Peter Argyle	CNPA Board
Duncan Bryden (Chair)	CNPA Board
Nick Halfhide	CNPA Staff
Susan Walker	CNPA Board

Apologies:

Angus Gordon	CNPA Board
David Green	CNPA Board

Welcome and Apologies

1. Duncan Bryden welcomed everyone to the meeting. He noted apologies from Angus Gordon and that David Green was unable to attend as transport from the Western Isles had been disrupted.

Minutes of the meeting on 16th January 2004

2. These were approved with no changes.

Matters arising

3. There were no matters arising.

Progress update

State of the Park Report and Health Indicators Research

4. Duncan Bryden informed the Group that he had assisted officials in considering the tenders received for this research. Three companies had been interviewed, and one selected for further detailed negotiation. Due to the value of the research, the approval of the Scottish Executive will be required before proceeding further. Murray Ferguson and Fiona Newcombe had also taken part in the selection process. The chosen consultant is proposing a consultative method which will involve the working group and others in a small number of seminars to consider the information gathered, and to do some analysis of the implications leading from it.

Park Plan Officer

5. Nick Halfhide noted that Hilary Kernohan, the new Park Plan Officer is due to start soon after Easter. Her time will be dedicated to developing the Park Plan.

Other research

6. Nick Halfhide noted that he hoped to be in position to commission the other pieces of research agreed by the Board soon, including the policy context, as well as an analysis of the public funding streams within the Park.

Developing the vision, objectives, and policies

7. The group discussed how best to undertake this role, and what it could add to the process. It is agreed that officials should begin to develop a structure and framework for the Plan, which the group could then discuss in broad terms, with officials then filling in the detail. In due course this would then be presented to the Board for its views. This should also contain a time line of when each element of the plan would be produced.

Shape of the Park Plan

8. The group briefly considered some of the other plans from other National Parks. It was agreed that Nick Halfhide should get hold of more plans, and that these should be circulated amongst members of the group for discussion.

Advisory Panel on Joined-Up Government

9. The first meeting of this advisory panel is scheduled for 14th May 2004. It will be chaired by Andrew Thin, and all of the members of the Working Group are encouraged to attend if they can. The group considered that we needed to have our thinking on the Park Plan developed by this stage, in particular the time line, so that members of the advisory group know what is expected of them and how they can contribute. With that in mind it was agreed that the next meeting of the Working Group should be in advance of the advisory panel.
10. The aim of the first meeting should be to bring all of the partners up to the same level of understanding and commitment.

Agreement of Group's Purpose and Short Term Outputs

11. The Working Group considered that its purpose and short term outputs as recommended by the Board in 2003. The group confirmed that its purpose should be:
 - To steer the process agreed at the CNPA Meeting on 12th September 2003, and to report periodically to the board on progress.
12. The group felt however that the short term outputs should focus on agreeing the shape of the Park Plan, developing a framework for the material that it should contain, and

help gather the information required to develop the plan. With these aims in mind, it agreed on the following short terms outputs:

- To scope the shape of the Park Plan and develop a framework for its content for presentation to the Board by the end of June 2004.
- To initiate the collation of background information to inform the development of the Park Plan by the end of June 2004.

13. On the question of external involvement, the Working Group noted that it differed from many of the other working groups in that it was more of a project management group; and that broader external involvement in the development of the Park Plan would be through other mechanisms such as the research work, the Advisory Panel on Joined-Up Government, and other groups set up to develop individual policies.

AOCB

14. Following discussion, the group agreed that it would be useful to have a joint meeting with the Local Plan Working Group so that all parties were clear on how the two plans are linked, and the processes for their formation are co-ordinated. It was suggested that we should aim to meet in June.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15. It was agreed that the next meeting should be on 23rd April 2004 at a time to be confirmed.