
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: **DELIVERY PROGRESS REPORTS:**

- **National Park Partnership Plan**
- **Corporate Plan**

Prepared by: **Management Team and Operational Management Group**

Purpose

To present an overview of the progress with delivery of the National park Partnership Plan, and the CNPA's role in this through our own Corporate Plan; and take stock of the implications for future work

Recommendations

That the Board:

- a) Note progress with delivery of the National Park Partnership and Corporate Plans over the course of 2012/13;
- b) Consider what issues warrant further and deeper discussion and forthcoming Board meetings (with partners where appropriate);

Executive Summary

This paper sets out an overview of delivery against the National Park Partnership and Authority's Corporate Plans over 2012/13 and reports by exception on key issues impacting on delivery of those strategic plans.

The Annexes to the paper sets out a more detailed commentary on the delivery against National Park Partnership and Corporate Plan outcomes over the 6 months since the previous performance management report to the Board in October 2012.

Analysis of performance against agreed key performance indicators (KPIs) will be presented along with a future report to the Board to consider information and issues to present to the National Park Partnership meeting.

DELIVERY PROGRESS REPORTS - FOR DECISION

Background

1. The revised Corporate and National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) performance monitoring reports were presented to the Board for the first time in October 2012. These papers set out the analysis and commentary of performance in delivery against Corporate and NPPP outcomes over the first 6 months of both these plans.
2. This paper presents an update on performance at the end of the first year of both plans. This paper presents an overview of performance at this point in time. Annexes 1 and 2 provide a more detailed 6 monthly update on progress in delivering the NPPP and our Corporate Plan.

National Park Partnership Plan Delivery

3. We have now put in place the ongoing delivery, monitoring and review mechanisms, with 2013 being the first full year of delivery for the National Park Partnership Plan.
4. The annual National Park Partnership meeting to be chaired by the Minister for Environment is scheduled for October 2013. This meeting will bring together all partners involved in delivery to review progress, celebrate success and address challenges.
5. The Board agreed on adopting the plan to establish a sub-group of the partnership to lead the ongoing co-ordination of delivery and ensure cross sector connections. Called the Strategic Delivery Group, this group met for the first time in February 2013 and will meet twice a year. The February meeting focused particularly on the opportunity to collaborate on capital investment plans in the Park to make a consistent case for investment and to align effort and priorities.
6. The Strategic Delivery Group will meet twice a year, in the spring and autumn. Part of its role will be to oversee monitoring and reporting of progress which will then come forward to both the CNPA board and to the wider National Park Partnership in the autumn.
7. That review of progress will shape the focus for the annual Partnership meeting, chaired by the Minister for Environment, in which we will focus on particular themes that need better co-ordination, strategic choices on priorities or particular issues that need cross sector attention.
8. We plan to bring a paper to the Board on 2nd August that considers which issues to draw out from delivery progress for particular attention at the 2013 Partnership meeting.
9. General progress highlights to date include:
 - a) First meeting of the Strategic Delivery Group focused on collaboration for capital investment;
 - b) Completion of Cairngorms Nature Action Plan for approval;

- c) Start of development of the Economic Development Plan;
 - d) Two areas of the Park selected amongst six Scottish pilots for support from the Community Broadband Scotland seed fund;
 - e) Strengthening Communities Project launched;
 - f) First Cairngorms National Park Design Awards completed successfully; and
 - g) Year of Natural Scotland campaign underway.
10. More specific areas worthy of being drawn to the Board's attention in terms of delivery of the NPPP are set out in the following sections.
11. **Fragile Economy.** We highlighted the fragility of the Cairngorms and wider economy as a key exception to report in our last performance management report in October 2012 and this again requires to be highlighted at this time as a key environmental context continuing to influence delivery of the NPPP. General business confidence remains low, with some initial signs of improvement emerging. A good season for the three ski resorts in the Cairngorms has helped boost visitor numbers. Issues remain around seeking diversification of the economy of the National Park.
12. *To consider:* against this background, the establishment of the Economic Forum is important, as is development and delivery of an economic diversification plan. This work is currently progressing.
13. **Tourism.** Scotland's tourism sector continues to suffer from a fragmented approach across private (over 200 DMO organisations, and many local tourism associations) and public sector (HIE, SE, VS, NPAs, SNH, FCS). However, the new tourism strategy for Scotland (2012) and the coordinated approach provided by our own Sustainable Tourism Strategy provides us with the opportunity to demonstrate that National Parks can make a major contribution to Scottish Tourism. As discussed in March, we also benefit from a well supported Destination Management Organisation (the CBP). The public sector remains less joined up across the Cairngorms than is ideal and we consider that we should concentrate our efforts on embedding National Parks within the national tourism offering and developing simpler and more effective public private partnerships to support this work.
14. *To consider:* We continue to develop our drive with partners for a better integrated approach. We will discuss our work on tourism with the Board in May.
15. **Broadband.** *To note.* The roll out of broadband is a vital line of work in the NPPP and we continue to work with key partners including Scottish Government, HIE and local authorities to support improvements in broadband connectivity within the National Park. Recently, HIE have announced their investment programme in a fibre network to be delivered by BT. It is not yet clear what benefit this will bring to businesses and communities within the NP. The Scotland wide procurement which will provide for the rest of Scotland including Aberdeenshire, Angus and Perth and Kinross areas of the Park is still underway. There remains uncertainty as to what will be delivered and when. It is likely that communities will still need to deliver long term and sustainable solutions for themselves. The Authority's role is to build capacity in these communities and to influence wider delivery.

16. **SRDP and LEADER.** *To note.* The emerging structure of the SRDP and LEADER, and wider EU funding programmes for the 2014 to 2020 programme period remain in development. The fit of these programmes to the needs of the NP and the delivery of NPPP outcomes remains a key issue on which officers are engaged, as reported to the Board in October 2012. A more detailed update will be presented to Board as details of the programme proposals begin to emerge.

Corporate Plan Delivery

17. As with the commentary on the NPPP above, specific issues and aspects of Corporate Plan delivery worthy of highlighting by exception are set out in the following sections.
18. **Raising Profile of the Cairngorms National Park.** The two big opportunities identified in 2013 for raising the profile are the Year of Natural Scotland (YONS), and the 10th Anniversary of the formation of the Cairngorms National Park. The opening of Blair Atholl Visitor Centre by John Swinney MSP on 22nd March and the subsequent media coverage of 10th anniversary has provided an excellent start to this work. Websites, visitor information and regular 'e'news releases celebrate both the 10th Anniversary and YONS. Our website contains a number of written and video case studies spotlighting areas of success over the last 10 years. A range of events and activities are planned throughout the year including a number of ministerial visits. We also launch 'Cairngorms Nature' in 2013; a new partnership and action plan to enhance the outstanding nature of the National Park.
19. *To consider:* both YONS and the 10th anniversary represent major opportunities to raise the profile of the National Park requiring continued collective input from staff, Board and partners throughout the year.
20. **The Speyside Way extension project.** *To note.* This is one the largest projects we are leading – it is likely to require the order of £1.5m with £300,000 (20%) secured to date. This sum will be used to complete the route across Kinrara Estate in 2013/14 which has been the most contentious section to bring to fruition. Additional staff resources have been agreed to secure path agreements and take forward planning permission to enable it to be a project suitable for any available funding that comes forward at short notice. It remains a real challenge for the future.
21. **Windfarms and Renewables.** *To note.* These issues were noted as an exception area of work to highlight in the report to Board in October 2012 and remain issues on which officers are focusing work. At this point there are no specific updates to provide to the Board.
22. **Corporate Finances.** *To note.* This paper is written just as the financial year comes to a conclusion. It is too early to provide a definitive position on the financial year end, as invoices will continue to be received in relation to the 2012/13 financial year for some weeks yet. The Finance and Audit Committees will be kept informed of progress. At this point, we believe that the additional capital funding of £1.536 million received in the year has been fully utilised. We also believe that the final

outturn for the year will fall within the target range of between 1% overspend to 2% underspend against a total turnover of around £7 million.

Next Steps

23. This paper has been brought together at close to the end of the financial and operational year in order to provide the Board with a timely update on progress made against delivery of the Corporate and NPP Plans over 2012/13.
24. The performance management system has also drawn out a number of key performance indicators (KPIs) against which to assess performance. There has not been sufficient time available at this point to draw data together on these KPIs at this stage. The KPIs will be presented at a future Board meeting, along with a paper considering the information and issues to be presented to the National Park Partnership meeting. Key future stages of the process in monitoring 2012/13 delivery against strategic plans are therefore:
 - a) August 2013: Paper reviewing key delivery issues to address at National Park Partnership meeting.
 - b) October 2013: National Park Partnership meeting
25. Additionally, information on the Authority's financial performance over 2012/13 will continue to be presented as appropriate to the Board's Finance and Audit Committees.
26. Future key issues to be brought back to the Board for consideration over the next 6 months include:
 - a) Input to Economic Diversification Plan;
 - b) Approach to tourism;
 - c) SRDP and LEADER (subject to issue of forward programme proposals within the period);
 - d) Cycling action plan; and
 - e) Approach to access and recreation.

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