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# CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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## MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING held at the Grant Arms Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at 10.30am

### PRESENT

Peter Argyle	John Latham
Duncan Bryden (Convener)	Bill Lobban
Angela Douglas	Eleanor Mackintosh
Dave Fallows	Willie McKenna
Katrina Farquhar	Fiona Murdoch
Jeanette Gaul	Martin Price
David Green	Gordon Riddler
Kate Howie	Gregor Rimell
Gregor Hutcheon	Brian Wood

### In Attendance:

David Cameron	Hamish Trench
Andy Ford	Murray Ferguson
Grant Moir	Francoise van Buuren
Sandra Middleton	Lynn Anderson (Minute Taker)

### Apologies:

Mary McCafferty

### Welcome and Introduction

1. Duncan Bryden welcomed everyone to the meeting in particular Grant Moir who was attending his first formal board meeting as the new Chief Executive.

### Minutes of Last Meeting – Approval

2. The minutes of the meeting on 15th February were approved subject to the following changes.

3. Paragraph 13C should read “Confirmed that Members were happy to give presentations to schools within, as well as out of the Park and support the 2013/2014 Events Programme as set out in Annex 5.
4. Paragraph 23b) should read Willie McKenna: noted that with the continued illness of Mary McCafferty (directly elected member for the Grantown area) any Board Member should try and help cover her patch.

### **Matters Arising**

5. None

### **Declarations of Interest**

6. None declared

### **Cairngorms Business Partnership – Future Support (Paper 1)**

7. Sandra Middleton introduced this paper the purpose of which is to confirm the CNPA grant funding to the Cairngorms Business partnership for the delivery of their 2013/2014 business plan. This plan sets out the principles and priorities for delivery, reporting arrangements and CNPA and CBP Board liaison.
8. The paper recommends that the CNPA Board approve the funding package to the CBP of £60k subject to submission of the finalised business plan for the delivery of their 2013/14 business plan and confirmation of this plan through the CNPA Finance Committee.
9. This paper also recommends that a CNPA Board Member be nominated as a key liaison contact with the CBP board.
10. The CNPA Convenor acknowledged the great work of the CBP and the achievements thus far however there are areas which could be developed, enhanced and improved, these had been highlighted by Alan Rankin (CBP Chief Executive) and some CBP board Members following recent discussions with the CNPA.
11. In July 2012 the CNPA Board agreed, in principal, funding to the CBP of £60,000 per annum for 3 years, based on the business plan from the CBP coming back to the Board every year for final approval. This year is slightly different in that last year the CBP business plan had already been agreed and signed off by the CBP board but by bringing this paper to the CNPA Board at this time, before the 2013/14 business plan has final CBP board approval there is still an opportunity for the CNPA Board to influence what is in this business plan. The grant funding from CNPA was offered on 3 principles as agreed by the CNPA Board. These principles are:

- a) Delivery should be park-wide
- b) Delivery must be contributing to the National Park Plan and associated strategies,
- c) Must be broad-based public support for the partnership and its delivery.

12. It is proposed that a fourth principle should be added which is:

- a) Delivery should be for all business sectors.

13. Currently there are 284 members of the CBP, over 60 of which are non tourism.

14. The Priorities for Delivery have been identified through discussion with CNPA staff and CNPA board Members. These are priorities which we would like to see being delivered by the CBP in 2013/14.

15. Finally it has been recognised that there needs to be a better link between the boards of the CBP and the CNPA as well. This paper sets out the ways in which this could be strengthened, these include a joint annual networking meeting of both CBP and CNPA boards to update one another on activities and plans for the coming year along with having a nominated Member of the Park Authority board attending CBP board meetings.

16. In discussion the following points were made by Board Members present:

- b) Board Members asked what the duties of the appointed CNPA Board Member to the CBP board would be and what part they would play at their board meetings. It was explained that this was more about building relationships between the CBP board and CNPA board and not about “having an extra vote”.
- c) It was noted that Atholl and Glenshee are a key target area for the CBP however the area has been grouped with everyone else except Deeside/Donside and Angus and it was felt that this is a large target area for one member of staff. It was explained that within these areas the target areas had relatively few members.
- d) Concern was raised by a Board Member that the CBP, in an effort to save money for their members, was promoting businesses out with the park through the Route scheme and promoting businesses that are in direct competition with those in the Park
- e) There is a standing invite to CBP Board Members to attend CNPA meetings a Board Member felt this should be reciprocated and that any CNPA Board Member could attend a CBP Board meeting as an observer..
- f) Vitally important that the CBP is seen to be Park-wide not just one location
- g) Concern was raised by Board Members about the wording in Principles 1 and 4 and the use of the word should, Board Members felt this should be changed to must as in Principles 2 and 3.
- h) Collaboration with Royal Deeside DMO should be encouraged and they should be actively working together to explore any and every avenue of participation.
- i) Local Authority interests need to be aligned as much as possible with the CBP.

- j) A Board Member felt that there should be a direct reference in the letter of offer to CBP that the funding support is to enable to help the CBP in their delivery of the National Park Plan.
- k) Concern about stretched staff resources within the CBP and the deliverability of the work programme – must prioritise must do, want to do, nice to do.
- l) There was some discussion in to whether the CNPA can make things easier for the CBP for example inviting partners to the networking events.

17. The Convenor summarised as follows:

- a) Wording of Principles 1 and 4 should be changed from should to must.
- b) General support for the fourth principle in that it must include all businesses
- c) Emphasis on working more closely with reference to the National Park Plan
- d) Annual networking event is very important as a conduit to other bodies
- e) Capacity issue is something of significant concern. How do the CBP allocate their resources to deliver a large portfolio of outcomes. They need to prioritise these carefully.

18. The Board Members were happy to consider the possibility if there are any spare resources that these could be used as additional funding to the CBP. There is also the opportunity for the CBP to approach the CNPA for further funding for specific projects.

19. The Board Members present also felt that now would be a good opportunity to approach the local authorities who do not currently contribute to the CBP budget and whether funding could be secured from these councils for next year.

20. The Convenor suggested that any Board Member who wished to be considered as the key liaison contact and attend the CBP board meetings should speak informally to Murray Ferguson and Sandra Middleton.

**21. In conclusion the Board Members present approved the recommendations of the paper as follows:**

- a) Approved the £60,000 of core funding to the CBP subject to submission of the finalised business plan and confirmation through the Finance Committee.**
- b) The nomination of a CNPA Board Member as a key liaison with CBP Board**
- c) Agreed the principles, priorities and reporting arrangements**

## **Cairngorms Nature Action Plan (Paper 2)**

22. Andy Ford introduced this Paper to the Board. This Paper seeks Board approval of the final draft of the Cairngorms Nature Action 2013-18, highlights the next steps and priorities for the first year of the action plan and outlines the CNPA's contribution to delivering the Plan.

23. This Paper recommends that the CNPA Board approve the Action Plan for launch at the Cairngorms Nature Event being held in Aviemore on 18<sup>th</sup> May and that the CNPA Board note the next steps, priorities and CNPA commitment to delivering this Action Plan.
24. An invitation was made to all Board Members inviting them to the launch of the Action Plan on 18<sup>th</sup> May by the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs
25. The Action Plan had previously been circulated to the Board Meeting at a previous meeting, since then there has been some minor amendments to the Plan, most notably the naturalist and researcher community is now well represented, as are Rangers services. There is more in the Plan on community and economic well being and CDAG is noted as a partner and their work is recognised much more in the Plan.
26. In addition, the vision has been altered and the focus and the scope of the plan has been clarified to make it more clear to what its role in delivery will be over the next five years and particularly the role of key partners in delivery.
27. The action plan is a delivery mechanism for the policy set out in the National Park Partnership Plan and this is reflected in the four main areas of work mentioned in the action plan which are:
  - a) Improve the quality and connectivity of woodlands and wetlands for biodiversity
  - b) Implement priority actions for other habitats
  - c) Conserve and enhance key species through focused conservation action
  - d) Encourage, support, and provide opportunities for people to realise the benefits from, and help to look after, nature
28. The board paper outlines the next steps in the delivery of this action plan which includes the publishing of the plan itself and raising the profile of Cairngorms Nature.
29. The planning stage is now largely complete and we now have to deliver, looking at the areas of activity and mapping out what our partners are doing, making sure we are making a visible difference to conservation in the National Park.
30. Our role in delivery will involve
  - a) Promoting – championing the work that needs to be done
  - b) Co-ordinating the areas of activity
  - c) Inspiring (support) for businesses
  - d) National park being the lead on projects such as species restoration
31. The Chairman of the Cairngorms Strategy Group Martin Price, thanked Justin, Andy and Stephen for their work on the action plan and asked that this vote of thanks be minuted. The Strategy group chairman went on to make the following points:

- a) There should be a well structured website – interesting and structured to appeal to different types of people
  - b) Delivery – actions some will be ongoing or immediate priority, some will be delivered in five years and some will be longer term.
32. A Board Member asked whether the record system mentioned in the action plan would be shared with NESBREC (North East Scotland Biological Records Centre). It was confirmed that meetings had already taken place.
33. A Board Member mentioned how important it is that a timetable of what will happen and when is drawn up quickly. They also felt that it was important to try and get local authorities on side and make the action plan and its launch on 18<sup>th</sup> May as inclusive as possible
34. All Board Members present, were very enthusiastic and impressed with the quality and wording of this action plan.
35. A Board Member felt this plan was an opportunity to steal a bit the limelight for nature by making that emotional connection to people we have been striving to connect with.
36. The Board Members felt the launch of the Plan should be exciting and creative and provide a real opportunity for people to engage with nature easily.
37. A Board Member asked where this groups sits in relation to the Board and what is the CNPA Board's way of feeding in to it.
38. The Chief Executive explained to the Board that there should be regular updates to the Board from the whole Partnership on how the plan is being delivered. This will give the Board the opportunity to challenge the action plan and the partnership and make sure the plan is being delivered. In addition there are a variety of different plans and strategies being reviewed over the coming months and a further role for the board is to look at how all of this fits together.
- 39. The Chairman summarised the Board's recommendations as follows:**
- a) **Content to approve the action plan for launch on 18<sup>th</sup> May**
  - b) **Need the strategic actions, what it will deliver, focus on the timetable, where will we be in a year's time?**
  - c) **Make sure the partners are all on side.**

### **Delivery Progress Report (Paper 3)**

40. David Cameron introduced this paper which is the second delivery report on the National Partnership Plan and the Corporate Plan

41. These monitoring reports have been produced by the Programme Managers and Operational Management Group and are in the same format as was seen in October.
42. The accompanying Paper highlights some of the key issues that are impacting on the delivery of the strategic plans. These are more or less the same set of issues that were reported to the Board in October 2012. There has been some progress by the work that has been done over the last 6 months on these issues. As the reports are coming on a 6 monthly basis it is not always possible to get the data moving in that timeframe. The colour coding has been done on the basis of data that has moved.
43. These indicator targets have been taken from the National Park Partnership Plan and these targets reflect that.
44. This paper also gives Board Members the opportunity to highlight to Management Team and Operational Management Group, what they would like brought back for discussion and information to forthcoming Board meetings. Paragraph 26 of the paper highlights some future key issues being brought back to the Board over the next 6 months but if the board feel there is some issues which would be worthwhile discussing these can be factored in to the plans for future Board meetings.
45. The Convenor asked the Board Members present if they had any questions on the progress of the two documents?
46. The Convenor continued by saying it was encouraging that there were no red indicators however some work needs to achieve a baseline on the white indicators where no data is available.
47. The Convenor pointed out to the Board that it is important that they look at the longer term trends as they give a good indication of the direction of travel and if it is not going well it gives the Board the opportunity to question why this is.
48. A Board Member felt the layout of Table I did not make it clear what progress was to date on each of the outcomes, it was agreed that the insertion of a further column showing this would make it clearer
49. A Board Member was concerned about what some of the indicators are in regards to the 5 year outcomes. It was explained that there are further indicators which will come to the Board meetings through other work programmes.
50. The Chief Executive explained that the indicators are there to see at a glance whether or not we are heading in the right direction. There will be a report coming to the Board later on this year will be much more detailed about the National Park Partnership Plan and this report will be used for the ministerial visit in the Autumn.

51. A Board Member would like to see the Board undertake a strategic overview of the Park Authority and its strategic outcomes, where the overlaps are in our delivery and where the gaps are.
- 52. In summary the Board were happy to recommend the noting of progress in the delivery of the National Park Partnership and Corporate Plans however the decision was made that the issues warranting further discussion would have to be revisited. The Convenor mentioned that when the Board Members gave it some thought this could be fed into future Board meetings.**

## **AOCB**

53. Forward Look – the Convenor picked out the following forthcoming events:
- a) 29<sup>th</sup> April – Allt Lorgy restoration project visit from Paul Wheelhouse MSP for Environment and Climate Change
  - b) 18<sup>th</sup> May – Launch of Cairngorms Nature in Aviemore
  - c) 20-23<sup>rd</sup> June – Royal Highland Show
  - d) 25<sup>th</sup> June – Holyrood 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration hosted by Dave Thompson MSP. The Chief Executive extended an invitation to all Board Members to attend, if possible.

## **Date of Next Meeting**

54. Next formal Board meeting to be held on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> June in Glen Esk – to be confirmed.

Meeting ended at 1.00pm