

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: ADVISORY GROUPS AND WORKING GROUPS

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Purpose

This paper offers firm proposals of the establishment of advisory groups/panels and working groups, following discussion of earlier proposals at the Board meeting on 27th June.

Recommendations

That Members agree:

- To set up 5 advisory panels as detailed in the attached paper.
- To set up a number of working groups as detailed in the attached paper on the understanding that more may be established as required, but with the approval of the Board.
- The principle of offering financial support to a limited number of otherwise autonomous groups which are helpful in promoting the Park aims.
- That the effectiveness of these arrangements is reviewed from time to time by the Board

Executive Summary

The National Parks (Scotland) Act requires the Board to set up advisory panels to advise the Park Authority on its functions. Five advisory panels are proposed, one for each of the four statutory aims, plus one to advise on integration of those aims in the National Park Plan.

A number of working groups are proposed to develop and implement arrangements to deliver particular priorities (e.g. housing, ranger services). Project groups will also continue (and new ones established as required) to oversee projects which involve several partners (e.g. LBAP, Leader+). Working groups and project groups will be focused on delivering particular pieces of work, while advisory panels will tend to concentrate on more general discussion and assessment of the CNPA's aims and progress.

Other means of engaging with people on delivery of Park aims are proposed, including the use of seminars and financial support for autonomous groups.

ADVISORY GROUPS AND WORKING GROUPS

BACKGROUND

Advisory Panels

1. *Purpose:*
 1. a mechanism to provide CNPA with advice and feedback, to inform the National Park Plan, and to help tease out what the statutory aims of CNPA mean in practice;
 2. a means of communicating CNPA thinking and to improve communication and mutual understanding generally about the NP and the CNPA; and
 3. to satisfy the requirement of section 20 of the National Parks (Scotland) Act to set up “one or more National Park Advisory Groups with the function of advising the National Park authority on any matter relating to the functions of the authority” (note that the term “Panel” is preferred to emphasise the role and distinguish from Working and Project Groups).

2. *Five CNPA Advisory Panels are proposed:*
 - Advisory Panel on Joined Up Government - to advise the CPNA on the development and then implementation of the NP Plan as a strategic framework for joined up public sector activity in the NP.
 - Advisory Panel on Natural and Cultural Heritage - to advise the CPNA on furthering statutory aim (a).
 - Advisory Panel on Sustainable Use of Natural Resources - to advise the CPNA on furthering statutory aim (b).
 - Advisory Panel on Understanding, Enjoyment and Recreation - to advise the CPNA on furthering statutory aim (c).
 - Advisory Panel on Sustainable Communities - to advise the CPNA on furthering statutory aim (d).

(Note that the integrated nature of the four statutory aims will be emphasised to all advisory panels, and members will be asked to advise on both furthering and integrating those aims).

3. *Administrative arrangements:*
 - CNPA to determine detailed remit, membership, frequency of meetings (normally two per year), agendas.
 - Membership of each panel to be normally around ten to fifteen people.
 - CNPA to be able to call *ad hoc* advisors to particular meetings.
 - CNPA Board Member to chair – and attendance by any/all other Board Members encouraged.
 - CNPA to provide secretariat.
 - Travel expense payable by CNPA except to attendees who work for other public agencies.

4. *Comment:*

Although these groups can change over time, the assumption is that they are “standing” groups, with a degree of permanence. The membership and remit will reflect the wish to tap into experience and expertise, the ability of individuals to contribute constructively to debate and discussion, and the need for thinking in the

CNP to be “joined up” and cross-sectoral. It must be made clear to all members that their role is to provide integrated and holistic advice, not to lobby or further their own particular interests. Active leadership and participation by Board Members will be essential, in part to ensure that all necessary advice is obtained, but most crucially in order to provide an effective integrating mechanism between the five panels.

Working Groups and Project Groups

5. *Purpose:*

- A delivery mechanism, usually time limited, for particular CNPA initiatives/work programmes/projects where partnership working is particularly important, and where no other suitable entity already exists. Note distinction between Working and Project Groups, the former being mainly concerned with project initiation and planning, and the latter with implementation.

6. *Working Groups:*

Groups that have been set up specifically to develop and implement plans for action relating to a particular CNP priority e.g.:-

- Ranger Services Working Group - to formulate, agree and then implement arrangements for provision of a CNP-wide approach to ranger services and associated public information provision.
- Food Marketing Working Group - to develop and implement new approaches to produce marketing under a CNP brand and/or umbrella mechanism.
- Housing Development Working Group - to develop and implement new approaches to housing investment based on as yet undefined local residency criteria (i.e. measures in addition to the existing Cairngorms Housing Strategy and focused on promoting private investment in, and ownership of, houses within the CNP by local people).
- Park for All Working Group - to develop and take forward measures and initiatives to remove barriers and make the benefits derived from the NP fully socially inclusive.
- Tourism Development Working Group - to establish better coordination of tourism related activity (mainly but not exclusively marketing) in the CNP, including between the three different ATBs within the Park, and to develop and implement CNP wide initiatives as appropriate.
- Access Working Group (expected to become the statutory Local Access Forum for the CNP) - to plan and coordinate delivery of the CNP’s duties under the access legislation, including the core path network.
- Integrated Public Transport Working Group - to develop and take forward measures to improve the effectiveness of public transport within the CNP in supporting CNP aims.
- Park Gateways Working Group - to develop and implement a coordinated approach to establishing appropriate “gateways” at the main entry points to the CNP.
- Other groups to be set up as required, and these might address such issues as habitat restoration, natural heritage research priorities, cultural activities, heritage interpretation, etc.

7. *Project Groups:*

Groups that have been set up specifically to steer a project in which the CNPA is involved as one of several partners and, while CNPA has an involvement, it is not the sole “owner” of the group. These groups are distinct from the working groups, though Working Groups may often evolve into Project Groups once plans have crystallized into specific multi-party projects: e.g:-

- Local Biodiversity Action Plan Group - to coordinate implementation of the LBAP.
- Local Action Group (LAG) - to coordinate implementation of the LEADER + project.
- Moorlands Project Steering Group - to coordinate implementation of the Moorlands Project.
- Cairngorms Housing Strategy Group (previously Cairngorms Housing Forum) - to coordinate implementation of the Cairngorms Housing Strategy.

8. *Administrative arrangements:*

- CNPA to determine remit, membership, frequency of meetings (variable according to purpose and need), agendas.
- Membership of each Working Group to normally be initially around three to five people (to ensure focus and delivery rather than talking for its own sake), but Project Groups may sometimes be larger if many interests involved in implementation.
- CNPA Board Member to chair - often more than one Board Member on each group, especially in early planning stages.
- CNPA to provide secretariat.
- Travel expenses payable by CNPA except to attendees who work for other public agencies.

9. *Comment:*

Working Groups and Project Groups will generally be time limited, and they will be kept under review as work is taken forward (groups are expected to evolve in function and composition over time, and eventually disband when the task has been completed). It will be important to keep membership small and focused on delivering defined outputs to a specified timescale. Not every initiative/task will require a Working Group, but those that are particularly in need of an integrated approach because of a wide range of interest groups might be obvious examples. The emphasis will be on achieving a particular end or delivering a particular outcome, rather than being general discussion/advisory groups. This is the clear distinction between Working or Project Groups on the one hand and Advisory Panels on the other.

Semi Autonomous Groups

10. There will be some groups that are self-generated and self-motivated, but which could benefit from some financial support from the CNPA. If such groups are considered to be helpful in promoting the Park’s aims, the CNPA should retain the ability to offer funding support through its own grant giving/project support arrangements. Examples might include Cairngorms Community Councils Group, Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce, Cairngorms Deer Management Forum, Cairngorms Landowners Group, Cairngorms All Abilities Access Group, Cairngorms Health and Fitness Group, etc. They will be initiated and led independently of the CNPA, and

while Board Members may be involved in their private capacity or to provide CNPA support, it will be important to emphasise that such groups will be neither controlled nor entirely resourced by the CNPA. The opportunity to seek support from the CNPA will be open to any autonomous group, but the level of CNPA support (if any) must be set to reflect the anticipated contribution to the CNP's aims, and then reviewed annually against actual delivery.

Consultative Seminars

11. It is quite impossible to include everyone in these panels and groups who has a legitimate interest in the CNP's work. Some people will be disappointed in not being appointed to these new mechanisms, including some who have in the past been involved in the Cairngorms Partnership Forums. In order to enable all legitimate interests to have a mechanism whereby they can interact with the CNP Board, and in order to enable the CNP Board to gain as wide a spectrum of advice and input as possible, an ongoing series of seminars will be organised to which a wide range of individuals will be invited. The details of this will evolve over time, but examples are expected to include a seminar for natural heritage interests, a seminar for cultural heritage interests, a seminar for the business community, a seminar for educational interests, a seminar for recreation interests, a seminar for local community interests, etc.

ADVISORY PANELS

Advisory Panel	Remit	Membership
Advisory Panel on Joined Up Government	To advise the CNPA on the development and then implementation of the NP Plan as a strategic framework for more integrated public sector activity in the NP.	Chief Executives of all public agencies and local authorities with a significant role to play in delivery of the Park Plan.
Advisory Panel on Natural and Cultural Heritage	To advise the CNPA on measures to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area.	Owners and managers of the natural and cultural heritage, and relevant specialist advisers.
Advisory Panel on Sustainable Use of Natural Resources	To advise the CNPA on measures to promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area.	Owners and managers of businesses based on sustainable use of natural resources, and relevant specialist advisers.
Advisory Panel on Understanding, Enjoyment and Recreation	To advise the CNPA on measures to promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public.	Users and providers (individual, commercial and not-for-profit) of the resources of the CNP for educational, general interest, enjoyment or recreational purposes, and relevant specialist advisers.
Advisory Panel on Sustainable Communities	To advise the CNPA on measures to promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.	Community representatives (incl. all ages), land and property owners, business and public service managers, and relevant specialist advisers.

WORKING GROUPS

(NB. These are examples, and not a definitive list. Individual groups will evolve over time as some complete their work and are disbanded, while others are established to tackle another priority issue that has been identified)

Working Group	Remit (outline)	Membership
Ranger Services Working Group	To formulate, agree and then implement arrangements for provision of a CNP wide approach to ranger services and associated public information provision.	Rangers, their employers, users of services and information that they provide, and relevant specialist advisers.
Food Marketing Working Group	To develop and implement new approaches to produce marketing under a CNP brand and/or umbrella mechanism.	Food producing and marketing businesses, and relevant specialist advisers.
Housing Development Working Group	To develop and implement new approaches to housing investment based on as yet undefined local residency criteria.	Community representatives, house builders/investors, and relevant specialist advisers.
Park for All Working Group	To develop and take forward measures and initiatives to remove barriers and make the benefits derived from the NP fully inclusive.	Individuals and representatives of those currently excluded in some way, providers of services for these people, and relevant specialist advisers.
Tourism Development Working Group	To establish better coordination of tourism related activity in the CNP, including between the three different ATBs within the Park, and to develop and implement CNP wide initiatives as appropriate.	Owners and managers of tourism businesses, ATB Chief Executives, and relevant specialist advisers.
Access Working Group (to become Access Forum)	To plan and coordinate delivery of the CNP's duties under the access legislation, including the core path network.	As recommended by government for Local Access Forums.
Integrated Public Transport Working Group	To develop and take forward measures to improve the effectiveness of public transport in supporting CNP aims.	Managers and users of public transport.
Park Gateways Working Group	To develop and implement a coordinated approach to establishing appropriate "gateways" at the main entry points to the CNP	Local authority heads of roads and transport services, Scottish Executive roads officials, and relevant specialist advisers.