
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: CNPA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

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Purpose

To update members on progress in developing proposals for our future approach to engagement with and support for the communities (of place) within the National Park.

Recommendations

- a) **That the Board note progress and ongoing liaison with key partners.**
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CNPA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT – PROGRESS UPDATE FOR INFORMATION

Background

1. We are reviewing our current approach to community engagement and support to help inform future delivery. This review is focused on support for Community-led Local Development, the role of the Association of Cairngorms Communities, and the CNPA approach to community engagement in general. It was anticipated that the review and future recommendations would be presented to the CNPA Board in September for decision. Due to a number of factors, however, the decision paper will be delayed until the Board meeting in December to allow further exploration of a number of issues. This information paper is designed to provide a progress report and update.

Progress

Community Empowerment Bill

2. The draft Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill places additional duties on CNPA and Local Authorities with regard to Community Planning. It also provides a greater focus on community engagement and community-led local development, through provisions around service planning, community asset transfer, and community right-to-buy. We are working with colleagues in Local Authorities to identify their current and proposed future approach to ensure that we are not duplicating their work but adding value to it.

Association of Cairngorms Communities

3. The Association of Cairngorms Communities (AoCC) has recently undertaken a review of its activities to determine the extent to which it is delivering its stated aims. The review has identified broad support for AoCC amongst existing members, who view it as a useful network, a chance to discuss Park-wide policy and an opportunity to discuss matters of common interest. The review also identified some possible improvements around extending membership, being more proactive as an organisation, and demonstrating how it adds value to other community forums across the Park. The summary report outlining the findings of the review is included in Annex I. AoCC Directors are considering the results of the review, with a discussion with all members taking place in September 2014.

Community-led Local Development (CLLD)

4. CNPA has historically invested in CLLD activity through supporting four Community Development Officer (CDO) posts across the National Park. Each post is employed as part of a wider project which is funded by a range of partners and is tailored to suit the particular context of the communities in which they work. The funding for these posts comes to an end next year and we are working with the key groups and funding partners to identify future requirements and potential funding opportunities. We are also investigating potential options and organisational structures to enable

these posts to become more sustainable in the long term. The current work on the LEADER Local Development Strategy is also a key consideration.

Next Steps

5. Further discussion will take place with funding partners and the steering groups of the existing CDO projects to help form recommendations for a future approach. A small group of Board members have been providing support and advice and will be involved in these discussions.
6. The AoCC will consider the findings of their recent review at their meeting in September and agree any changes to their current approach and delivery. This will inform proposals for CNPA's future approach and support.
7. A paper will be brought to the CNPA Board meeting in December with recommendations for our future approach to community engagement and support.

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ANNEX I – AoCC Review Summary Report

Review Report

Results of the review of the Association of Cairngorms Community Councils (2014)

Introduction

The Association of Cairngorms Communities (AoCC) Directors and Members agreed to undertake an organisational review in order to determine the extent to which the organisation is meeting its stated aims. Those stated aims are to:

- Aim 1** - provide a forum for sharing information, experience and networking;
- Aim 2** - identify shared issues and encourage appropriate action;
- Aim 3** - provide communication between the Cairngorms National Park Authority and other relevant organisations to support the exchange of views and information; and
- Aim 4** - assist the Cairngorms National Park Authority to engage with communities and to meet all its statutory aims.

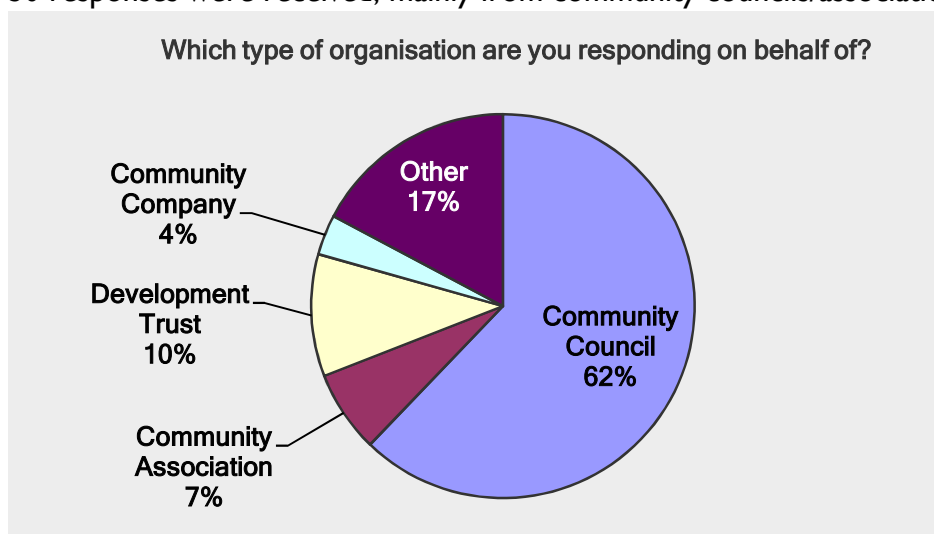
In addition, this review presented an opportunity for AoCC to gain information from members on the key positive aspects of AoCC and areas that could be improved. Moreover, one of the main topics of debate within AoCC has been the timing and location of meetings and this review presented an opportunity to develop a clearer understanding of the preferred arrangements.

Summary of Findings

There is broad general support for AoCC as an organisation. The majority of respondents feel that the aims of AoCC are appropriate and members feel that the organisation is meeting these aims to a large degree. AoCC is particularly useful as a networking opportunity and as a platform to discuss matters of common interest. There is general consensus that AoCC needs to be more proactive, widen its membership and be clearer about how it adds value to other community forums across the National Park.

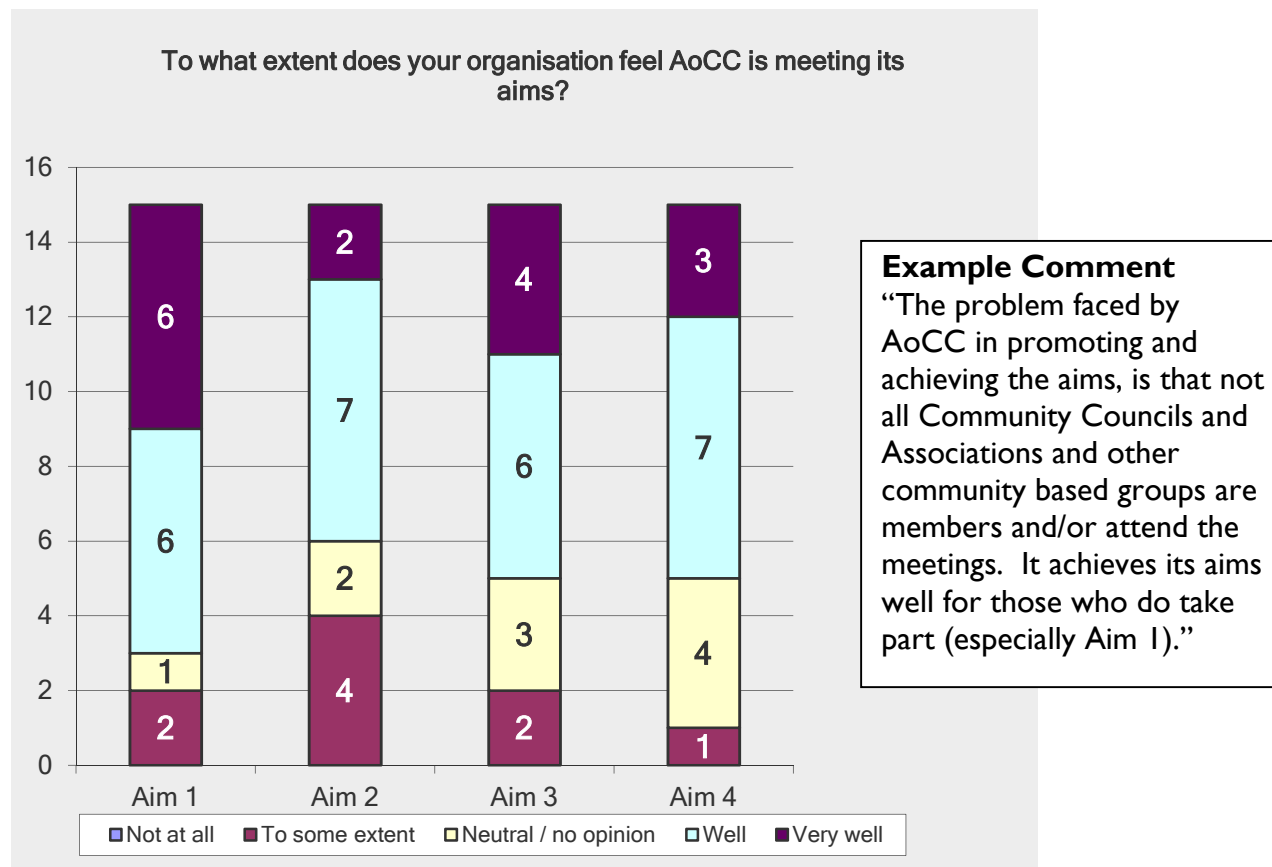
Respondent Information

- 30 responses were received, mainly from community councils/associations:



- 19 respondents (73%) are currently members of AoCC
- There is broad representation from all areas of the National Park, however no responses were received from Grantown-on-Spey, Newtonmore, Dalwhinnie/Laggan or Strathdon
- 5 non-members state that they would be interested in becoming members of AoCC

Aims of AoCC



- 87% of member respondents feel that the aims of AoCC are appropriate and the majority of non-members agreed
- 73% of member respondents stated that AoCC business is discussed at their organisational meetings, but the level of detail is limited
- 80% of member respondents stated that some form of community newsletter would be useful and large majority of non-members agreed

Example Comment

“A newsletter would draw attention to the AoCC agenda (CNPA already has a useful newsletter) and help to emphasise the importance of various common issues. There are many cross-Park issues that would profit from participation of community organisations from across the National Park. Better than sending round minutes which few people make the time to read.”

Key Positives

Members state that the main positives of AoCC are:

- Offering a networking opportunity to meet other community reps and public sector staff
- Providing an opportunity to discuss matters of mutual interest
- Finding out information from public agencies

Example Comments

“Chance to raise matters of importance in a wider forum of similar communities”

“An opportunity to meet and make new relationships with communities from within the Park”

“Opportunity to make comment on policies and plans”

Possible Improvements

Members suggest that possible improvements would include:

- Extending the membership beyond community councils/associations
- Being more proactive in trying to get other groups involved and “selling” AoCC
- Adding value to other community meetings/discussions

Example Comments

“Need for wider membership to ensure all communities are represented and thereby give strength to the community voice and involvement in being part of the National Park.”

“More pro-active approach to Aims 2 and 3 to add value”

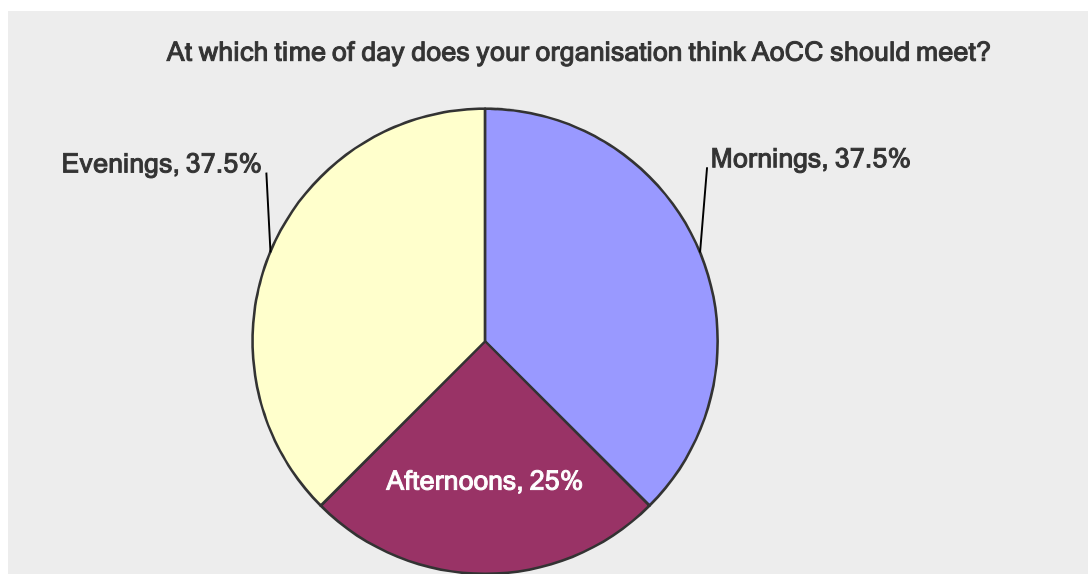
Meeting Arrangements

- Just over half of respondents feel that the current meeting arrangements are appropriate, with 75% favouring the current quarterly arrangements

Example Comments

“If AoCC is to be attractive to a variety of bodies, then the meetings need to vary in their times.”

“Perhaps alternate timings so people have more opportunity. A couple evening meetings, a couple lunch time ones, give more people opportunity.”



- All respondents feel that the meeting location should be moved around the National Park

Next Steps

The review findings will be shared with AoCC Directors and Members and discussed at the next AoCC meeting on 3rd September 2014. Directors may wish to offer a couple of options for discussion with members regarding the future of the organisations, based on the results of the survey.

The broad results will also be used to inform a paper being presented to the Cairngorms National Park Authority Board later in September, which focuses on community empowerment, through engagement and development activity.

A more detailed report can be made available on request, including all statistics and comments – please contact

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