

## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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**Title:** OPERATIONAL PLAN

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### **Purpose**

To seek the Board's approval to the operational plan for 2004-05, and to note progress with delivery over the first quarter.

### **Recommendations**

That the Board:

- approve the operational plan as the basis on which staff take work forward during the financial year, seeking further approvals for specific items of expenditure through the finance committee as appropriate;
- note the intention to update on progress with delivery of the operational plan each quarter (Jun, Sep, Dec, Mar), and to set this in the context of monitoring by the finance committee and audit committee;
- approve the proposed description of our core values, based on discussions by Board members and staff.

### **Executive Summary**

The operational plan is derived from the corporate plan, and shows the actions and outputs intended to deliver the first year (2004/05) of the corporate plan. 105 actions/outputs are detailed for the year, representing a mix of items designed to deliver longer term major objectives (such as the National Park Plan, Local Plan), items designed to develop and build the organisation over a period of three years or so, and short term pieces of work to deliver immediate outputs (publications, grant schemes). Monitoring progress will be through three mechanisms – the Board will receive quarterly progress reports on delivery of actions/outputs; the finance committee quarterly reports on expenditure, and the audit committee quarterly reports on control systems and efficiency.

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## OPERATIONAL PLAN

### Introduction

1. This paper presents the CNPA's first operational plan, setting out in some detail how we will be delivering the first year (2004/05) of our first corporate plan (approved by the Board on 7 May this year. The operational plan shows one year's worth of activity, and while it is important to be able to focus on short term activities and delivery, it is equally important to see this in context – many of our aims are relatively long term, and it will be several (in some cases many) years before we are really seem to have “made a difference”. Given the nature of our statutory aims, and the complexity of the issues which led to the establishment of a National Park, this is inevitable.
2. In practice, the CNPA will always need to strike a balance between the expectations on us to make an impact immediately, and the need to work on issues which may not have an end-point for several years. It is important therefore to ensure that we have in place a complete framework, shown at Annex 1, which ensures that our day-to-day activities are driven by our longer-term priorities, and our values. Monitoring of our day-to-day and month to month achievements within the year also need to be seen in this wider and longer-term context (discussed below).

### Values

3. Several discussions by the Board at informal sessions, and by the staff at away days, have addressed our overriding aspirations – these have now been distilled by a working group of staff and Members into a set of core values, shown at Annex 2. These should underpin everything we do, and provide a reference point for all our actions and policy development. The Board is invited to adopt these as the core values for the whole organisation.

### Corporate Plan, Operational Plan, Workplan

4. The Corporate Plan, which reflects these values, sets out six main themes and objectives within each theme. The operational plan, shown at Annex 3, replicates those same themes and objectives, and sets out the actions and outputs during this financial year for delivering those objectives. The operational plan is underpinned by an even more detailed workplan, available to Members if they are interested, but not included here simply because it is very large and very detailed. It is the planning tool, used by staff to construct the operational plan and associated budgets. It will also be used by the Senior Management Team to monitor on a monthly basis, delivery and expenditure. Finally, it also provides the basis for each member of staff's jobplan for the year.

### Monitoring Performance and Expenditure by the Board

5. The role of the Board is to set the strategic direction of the organisation, within which staff then work. There are three mechanisms through which the Board keeps oversight of progress:

6. ***Delivery/Outputs:*** The operational plan is intended for use by the Board for quarterly monitoring of delivery this year of our objectives in the corporate plan. It focuses on the planned outcomes, and the timing of these. The intention for this year is that the report should come to the Board approximately quarterly – August, October, December and February.
7. ***Expenditure:*** The activities set out in the operational plan require expenditure. In broad terms this will be done through the quarterly reports to the finance Committee (planned for 21 May, 27 August, 26 November, and February 2005). Finance Committee papers go to all Board Members for information.
8. ***The Three Es:*** The oversight of effectiveness, efficiency and economy is carried out by the audit committee. They meet quarterly to consider reports by the internal and external auditors giving assessments of the adequacy of the various operating systems in place, and in particular how those tackle the challenges of risk, openness, potential fraud, accountability, etc.
9. In practice, the workplan will be monitored and updated each month by the Senior Management Team. Proposed changes will be reported to the Finance Committee and Board through the quarterly reporting process, and approval sought as appropriate (using the previously agreed scheme of delegation of authority, approved by the Board in May this year).

#### **Report on First Quarter (Apr-Jun 2004)**

10. The Board will receive quarterly updates on delivery of outputs, using the operational plan shown at Annex 3 (derived from the master operational plan). Those actions/outcomes which have been completed are recorded as such, in bold, in the Progress column. Any actions or outcomes which should have been completed, but have not been, are also flagged up in the progress column, as are any entries which need to be amended for actions/outcomes which are likely to slip.
11. The report at Annex 3 shows the position up to the 31 July 2004. Your attention is drawn to the following:
  - a) Actions 2 & 3: phase 1 of the entry point signage has largely been concluded, and following discussion at the July Board meeting, further work is being done to firm up the proposals and prepare detailed costings. A further report will be brought to the Board in September/October.
  - b) Action 6: Local Access Forum. Work remains on track, and establishment of a Local Access Forum(s) for the Park will be a major achievement. This Forum will take over from the Access Working Group.
  - c) The completion and submission of the National Park Plan is a major medium term objective, for delivery September 2006. There are a number of actions to be completed this year. Action 71 refers to completion of the State of the Park report. Note that this remains on track with the contract to complete the State let in April.
  - d) Action 75, 76: Work preparing for the initial consultation to inform the first draft of the Local Plan is continuing to schedule

- e) Several major projects continue: the Moorlands Project (Action 32), The Land Based Business Project (action 35), Local Biodiversity Action Plan Project (Action 43), LEADER + (action 69). Each has its own action plan and steering group, and is due to end beyond the current year.
  - f) The delivery of the planning and development control function (actions 61-65) is on-going, with considerable resources devoted to a fortnightly cycle of planning committee meetings to decide call-in and determination of planning applications. After a year's experience of this unique function, it is proposed that we review our arrangements (Action 65a).
  - g) A large number of actions and outputs are shown under the theme "Develop an organisation that is trusted and respected". This is clearly a long-term ambition, and success will only be measurable after a number of years. However, as a new public body only a year old, there remain a large number of actions this year, and for the next 2-3 years, to put in place a fully functioning and efficient organisation.
12. The operational plan shows the large number of strands of work in hand, with 105 actions /outputs for the year. The majority of outputs are scheduled for delivery in the second half of the year, a reflection of the time it takes to develop the capacity and momentum of a new organisation.

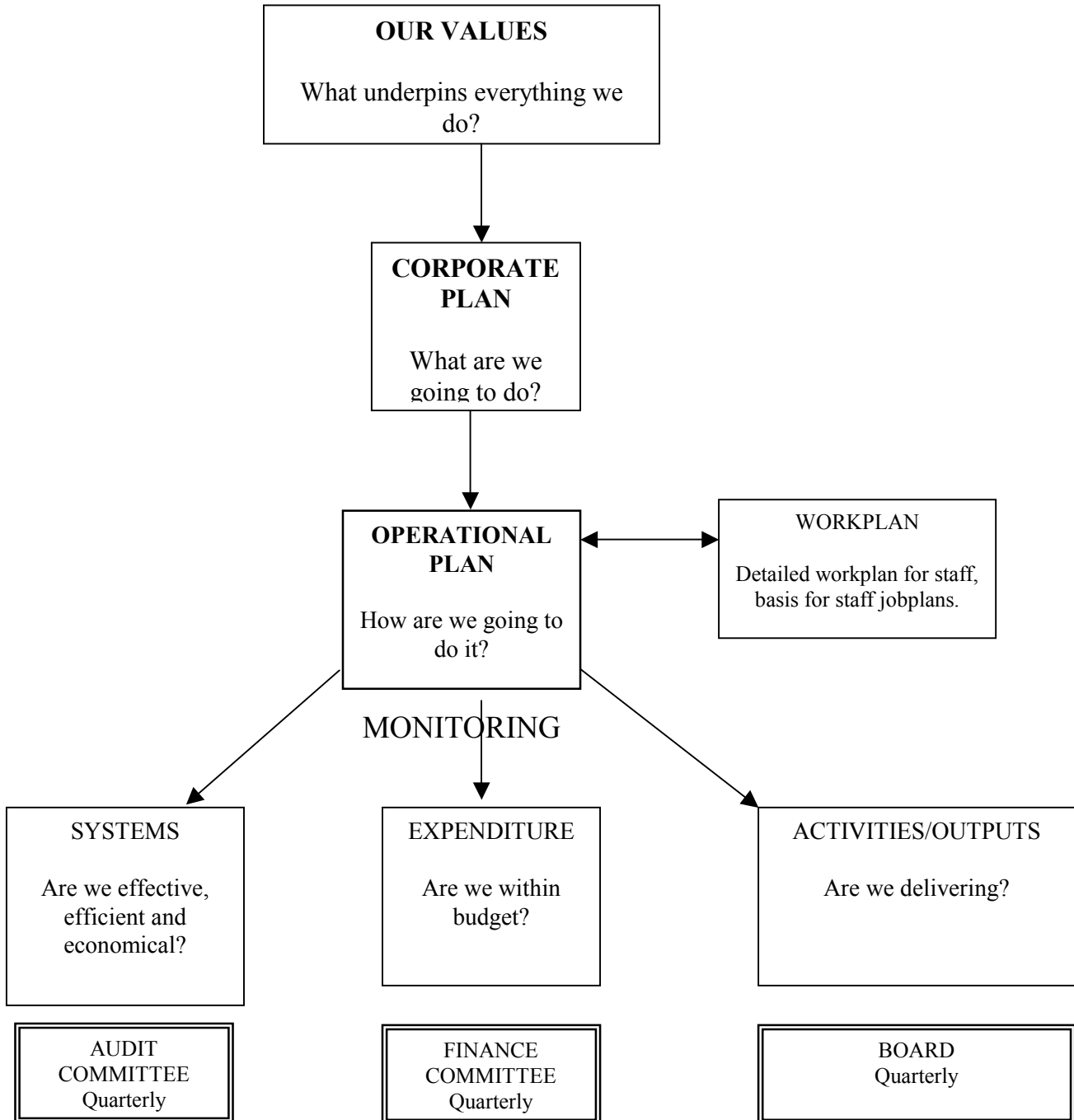
### **The Annual Cycle**

13. We will be notified of our financial settlement for the next 3 years (05/06 to 07/08) by Scottish Ministers in September. We will need to prepare the next corporate plan on the basis of this settlement, and submit to Scottish Ministers by December. Our operational plan for 2005/06 should be prepared soon thereafter, around February at the latest. Unlike our first year, this timetable will give us a certain financial basis on which to prepare our corporate plan well in advance of the planning period.

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**5 August 2004**

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## CONTEXT FOR THE OPERATIONAL PLAN



## CNPA'S CORE VALUES

The Cairngorms National Park Authority aims to be an open, inclusive, innovative and professional organisation that behaves with integrity.

### **Integrity**

Honest, trustworthy, fair, reliable, consistent, clarity of vision, good leadership, prudent.

### **Open & inclusive**

Transparent, clear, approachable, accessible, accountable, responsive, listening, user-friendly, public-focused, fun to work for.

### **Innovative**

Dynamic, bold, willing to take risks, supportive and trusting atmosphere, learning from mistakes, embracing new technology, high environmental standards.

### **Professional**

Committed, competent, knowledgeable, responsible, efficient, getting things done