
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: DEVELOPING A PARK FOR ALL - SOCIAL INCLUSION

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Purpose

This purpose of this paper is to seek the Board's endorsement of a proposed CNPA approach to social inclusion issues, with regards to both the development of the Park Plan and the Authority's own activities.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

- agree the proposed key groups as a basis for future targeted support in addressing barriers to social inclusion;
- endorse the analysis of key social inclusion constraints and note that it will be used to inform the development of the Park Plan;
- note that mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that social inclusion issues are properly addressed in the development of projects that are led/supported by the CNPA;
- agree that, in terms of how it operates, the CNPA must strive to be an exemplar organisation with regards social inclusion issues.

Executive Summary

Overseen by the Board's Park for All Working Group, an analysis has been conducted of key groups that face barriers to social inclusion and of the nature of these barriers. This analysis has been considered both in the context of barriers to people being able to participate in the economic and social life of the Park and of people being able to access the Park. Key groups identified as being more likely to face such barriers include young people, people on low incomes, women, older people, disabled people and ethnic minority or inner city groups.

It is evident that social inclusion is very much a cross-cutting issue that needs to be considered within all of the Authority's policy and project development activity. Consideration of appropriate ways to address the identified barriers will therefore form part of the work of developing the Park Plan. Mechanisms will also be developed to ensure that social inclusion issues are adequately addressed in the development of projects that are led/supported by the CNPA. It is also proposed that, in terms of the way in which it operates, the Authority should strive to be an exemplar organisation in social inclusion terms.

DEVELOPING A PARK FOR ALL - SOCIAL INCLUSION

Introduction

1. In its Corporate Plan, the CNPA sets out its vision for the next 5 years under 6 broad themes. One of these is ‘to develop a Park for All’, which we are interpreting as meaning a Park which is accessible and able to be enjoyed by everyone, and not just for the fit and the few or the better-off. This refers not only to residents within the National Park, but also to people from the rest of Scotland and beyond. To achieve this the CNPA has undertaken to take a lead role in ensuring that there is adequate infrastructure, information and support mechanisms in place.
2. The Park for All Working Group was set up to develop this policy theme and implement a plan for action. More specifically, the aim of the Group is ‘to develop and take forward measures and initiatives to remove barriers and make the benefits derived from the National Park socially inclusive.’
3. As a first step towards this, the Group has undertaken to produce a report, which follows, detailing the key constraints and social inclusion issues to be tackled, and then setting out proposals for how these might be addressed with particular defined priority client groups in mind.
4. The following paper firstly sets out the strategic and legislative context for the work of the Park for All Working Group, defines what is meant by social exclusion and the various social groups that are affected. The key issues and constraints, which cross-cut many target groups, are then highlighted. Recommendations follow which set out how social inclusion issues are incorporated in all aspects of the CNPA’s business, including policy and project development, and the ways in which it fulfils its organisational responsibilities.

Strategic Context

5. The actions of the Park for All Working Group should be considered in the light of the Scottish Executive’s policies set out in ‘Rural Scotland: A New Approach’, which *‘reflect our commitment to putting social justice at the heart of Scottish life, in all our communities’*. In addition, the SE has agreed six new objectives that will be used to drive anti-poverty initiatives through its Community Regeneration Fund, namely:
 - Regenerating the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods;
 - Increasing chances of sustained employment for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups;
 - Improving the confidence and skills of the most disadvantaged children and young people;
 - Reducing the vulnerability of low income families to financial exclusion;
 - Increasing the rate of health improvement for people living in the most deprived communities;
 - Improving access to high quality services for the most disadvantaged groups and individuals in rural communities.

Legislation

6. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) was passed by the UK Parliament and protects disabled people against discrimination in areas of: employment; access to goods, facilities and services; and education. Some sections of the DDA are already in force, but by 1 October 2004, all providers of goods, services and facilities, including public authorities, will have had to make reasonable adjustments to the physical features of their premises. This will also apply to providers of outdoor recreation facilities in terms of their path networks or promotional literature.
7. In addition, under a new draft Disability Bill, public authorities will have a duty to promote disability equality within their organisation, in a similar way that the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 has done with regard to race.
8. This legislation will place certain responsibilities on the CNPA as a public authority and a service provider, but it will also provide an opportunity to demonstrate best practice in making improvements to our service and the way we work, and through working with others, to provide fully inclusive facilities.

What is Social Exclusion / Inclusion?

9. Definitions of social exclusion include:
 - ‘a lack of or exclusion from full citizenship’ (SCVO briefing)
 - ‘a lack of access to the opportunities that enable an individual to have, or aspire towards, a decent standard of living’ (SE Rural Poverty and Inclusion Working Group)
10. On the other hand, social **inclusion** is described as being a part of mainstream society (Slee, 2001). An inclusive society is ‘one which values diversity, working to secure the rights of all people by combating disadvantage, discrimination and abuse’. (Shetland Islands Council)
11. Some of the factors usually considered in defining social exclusion include low incomes, poor housing, poor health and disability, lack of education and employment opportunities and discrimination.

Groups affected by Social Exclusion

12. The above factors typically affect groups who suffer injustice or exclusion from the community, based on their age, race, faith, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. Bearing in mind the Park for All theme and implications of the DDA, it is useful to identify groups who are likely to experience social exclusion in accessing the National Park, as well as those who live in the Park.
13. Research by Shucksmith (2000) identifies the principal groups affected by exclusion living in rural areas, while Slee (2001) has identified groups who are under-represented in participating in countryside recreation. Using these groups and basing them loosely around the life cycle framework adopted by the Scottish Executive, key target groups are

suggested, which will help the CNPA to focus its priorities with regard to tackling social exclusion and creating a Park for All. These key groups include:

- Young people
- People on low incomes
- Women
- Older people
- Disabled people
- Ethnic minority and inner city groups

14. Recommendation: Having considered the paper and the key groups listed, the Board is invited to agree the proposed key groups as a basis for future targeted support in addressing barriers to social inclusion.

Key Constraints

15. Each of the target groups is subject to various forms of social exclusion; some groups experience multiple disadvantages, while many issues of social exclusion cut across several target groups. Research by Shucksmith, and information gathered by the Cairngorms Partnership highlight the various constraints and barriers to those living in rural areas such as the National Park, while there are separate issues to consider in addressing people accessing the Park, which apply to both residents and visitors.

Groups living in the National Park

16. The key constraints experienced by the target groups who live in the National Park are detailed below, followed by some examples:

17. Public transport tends to be limited, unco-ordinated, costly and difficult to access physically, which can lead to isolation and non-participation.

- For those at school, accessing leisure services and after-school activities means relying on parents/others for lifts or not participating;
- For some young people and those on low incomes, the option of owning a car is too expensive;
- Some women can become socially isolated if they cannot drive or their partner uses the family car for his work.
- For older and disabled people, declining mobility and physical barriers can reduce access to public and private services, including transport - even though these groups often have no other option than to use public transport.

18. There is a widespread lack of affordable housing, particularly for single people, those on low incomes, and single parents, and those with special needs, particularly learning disabilities.

19. Opportunities and support in higher education, training and jobs are much less available than in towns:

- Shortage of well-paid, better quality jobs
- For women, flexible jobs that fit in with family life tend to be low paid, seasonal and insecure

20. Access to information and quality of advice is poor in rural areas compared to urban areas:
- For young people, information on careers, jobs, training, health, other opportunities in the National Park;
 - For people on low incomes, older people and those with disabilities, information on jobs, training, benefits and other entitlements;
 - Poor access to IT particularly affects older people, and those on low incomes;
 - The format of information provided is often inappropriate for some of the intended audience, eg. people with visual impairments.
21. Poor health and disability
- Health is everyone's business, but is particularly significant to older people and people with disabilities and in terms of tackling obesity in children.
22. Other issues which affect individual target groups include:
- Adequate provision of social and leisure opportunities for young people;
 - Getting young people's voices heard in local governance;
 - Lack and/or expense of childcare provision preventing women from finding work;
 - Lack of support for people with other caring responsibilities;
 - Poverty amongst older people due to sole reliance on state pension.

Groups accessing the National Park

23. The key constraints experienced by the target groups who access the National Park are detailed below, followed by some examples. These relate particularly to young people, those on low incomes, people with disabilities, and ethnic/inner city groups.
24. Reliance on public transport within and coming into the Park:
- Limited, unco-ordinated and costly services;
 - Poor information on availability of public transport within the Park;
 - Not accessible to people with certain disabilities.
25. Lack of awareness and poor access to information on the National Park:
- For young people, current information on the National Park is not appealing and difficulty in accessing it, therefore awareness of National Park and various opportunities it provides is low;
 - For people with disabilities, lack of awareness and information on accessible countryside sites, services and facilities, or who to contact if difficulties arise;
 - The format of information provided is often inappropriate for some of the intended audience, eg. people with visual impairments;
 - For people on low incomes or from inner cities far beyond the NP, information is not relevant or accessible.
26. Other barriers in accessing the countryside include:
- Physical barriers, particularly for disabled people, reduce access to public and private services and facilities (although this should improve under DDA);

- Ethnic and inner city groups can experience cultural barriers whereby countryside recreation can have a limited role in leisure traditions;
- Ethnic and inner city groups can experience psychological barriers which instil a sense of ‘not belonging’ to the countryside;
- Several groups can have a fear of discrimination;
- Financial barriers can be experienced by all groups.

Analysis of Current Social Inclusion Activity

27. An audit of social inclusion activity in the Cairngorms showed that there is a huge and diverse range of work and initiatives happening throughout the area. A summary of these, as they relate to the key constraints identified above, is shown in the table below. These are by no means comprehensive but they do indicate that there is already a wide range of activity being progressed by both the Authority and partner organisations in seeking to address the identified constraints.

Constraint	Current activity
<i>Public transport</i>	
Lack of local transport means isolation and non-participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidised Taxi schemes • Community Buses • Community car schemes • Car sharing scheme
Public transport within and into the NP can be limited, costly and not co-ordinated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Public Transport work to be progressed by the CNPA’s Economic Development Officer • Outdoor Access Strategy to be developed
<i>Affordable Housing</i>	
Local people on local wages are priced out of the housing market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cairngorms Housing Strategy • CNPA Housing Policy Officer • CNPA developing planning policies • Highland Housing and Community Care Trust • Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust • Local Housing Associations

<i>Education, training and employment</i>	
Lack of opportunities in higher education, training and jobs;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land based businesses training scheme • Skills Development initiative • Community Learning Centres • Social firms • Youth Apprenticeship Scheme
Shortage of well paid, better quality jobs	
Lack and/or expense of childcare prevents women finding work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After-school clubs, • Holiday Playschemes • Variable level of registered childminders
<i>Access to advice and information</i>	
Poor access to information and advice on careers, jobs, training, health, other opportunities, benefits, etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councils for Voluntary Service • CAIS • Libraries • Post Offices • Community newsletters • Health Centres • Job Centres
<i>Health and Fitness</i>	
Poor health and disability, particularly significant to older and disabled people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Badenoch and Strathspey Affordable Health and Fitness Project (finished) • Walking to Health, Paths to Health projects • Voluntary Sector eg Dachaid, Crossroads, etc • Walking Festivals • Disabled Rambler Groups
<i>Young people's voices</i>	
Young people's views are often not heard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cairngorms Youth National Park Manifesto (2001) • CNPA Youth Communication Initiative and Schools Group • Dialogue Youth • Scottish Youth Parliament • Highland Youthvoice • Angus Youth Congress • Local Youth Forums/Councils
<i>Awareness and information on the NP</i>	
Lack of awareness and poor access to information on the National Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNPA website being developed • NP Visitor Guide • NP leaflet • Parklife newsletter • CNPA Communications Strategy

<i>Other Barriers in accessing the NP</i>	
Physical barriers reducing access to the countryside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fieldfare Trust proposal • Improvements by providers under DDA • Sport Anywhere • Uphill Ski Club
Cultural and psychological barriers and fear of discrimination can inhibit ethnic, inner city or disadvantaged groups from visiting the NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Muir Award programme • Outdoor Centres activity programmes • Princes Trust schemes
Financial barriers can prevent disadvantaged groups from visiting the NP	

28. The above issues cover a broad spectrum of policy areas, which serves to illustrate the cross-cutting nature of social inclusion and the Park for All theme. It is clear that responsibility for addressing many of these social inclusion issues rests with other agencies and organisations who are already delivering in their field of work, eg housing, education, health, business development. Therefore a key role of the CNPA, via the mechanism of the Park Plan, will be to ensure that all of the identified barriers are being addressed in a co-ordinated manner. It will be the responsibility of all of the CNPA officers that are drafting policy for the Park Plan, to ensure that the barriers relating to their particular policy areas are considered and addressed. Relevant external partner organisations will, of course, be engaged in this process. Part of the role of the Social Inclusion Policy Officer will be to provide advice and guidance to these staff, and to ensure that all of the identified barriers have been addressed within the Park Plan.

29. Recommendation: The Board are invited to endorse the analysis of key social inclusion constraints and note that it will be used to inform the development of the Park Plan.

30. As well as embedding social inclusion thinking within our approach to policy development, we need to ensure that it is also embedded within our approach to project development and appraisal. Irrespective of whether projects are developed by the Authority, or by a partner organisation and grant aided by the Authority, we need to be confident that they will properly address the needs of the key groups that have been identified as being at risk of social exclusion. Best practice in this respect will be identified and appropriate mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that CNPA supported projects have been ‘social inclusion proofed’. It is envisaged that this will be achieved via amendments to the format of the existing project appraisal documentation and through continued staff training upon social inclusion issues (such as the disability awareness training for all staff and Board members).

31. Recommendation: The Board are invited to note that mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that social inclusion issues are properly addressed in the development of projects that are led/supported by the CNPA.

32. Finally, if the CNPA is serious about social inclusion, it must set an example not just in terms of its policy and project work, but also in terms of how it operates as an organisation. A number of internal issues have already been taken on board, as identified by the All Abilities Communications Network and from research commissioned by the Cairngorms Partnership on mainstreaming disability equality. For example, a hearing loop has been purchased and a list of accessible venues is being compiled for Board meetings. Our Communications Strategy includes accessibility objectives to ensure that information about the Park is accessible, has a high standard of clarity, and that it is made easy for people to respond and become involved in dialogue with the CNPA. As an employer, there are flexible working arrangements in place (which is helpful to people with childcare or other caring responsibilities) and the recruitment and selection process has been designed to be fair and equitable. This is a good start but it is proposed that the Authority should seek to stand out as an exemplar organisation in respect of social inclusion issues. This is an area that the Social Inclusion Policy Officer will work to identify further actions in conjunction with the Authority's Corporate Services and Communications Groups.

33. Recommendation: The Board are invited to agree that, in terms of how it operates, the CNPA must strive to be an exemplar organisation with regards social inclusion issues.

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