

**MINUTE of MEETING of the
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK ADVISORY PANEL ON JOINED UP
GOVERNMENT**

**held at the Heather Centre, Dulnain Bridge
on 14th May 2004**

PRESENT

Andrew Thin	CNPA Board (Chair)
Mark Adderley	Scottish Water
Les Allan	Aberdeenshire Council
Peter Argyle	CNPA Board
Duncan Bryden	CNPA Board
Campbell Gemmell	Scottish Environment Protection Agency
Angus Gordon	CNPA Board
David Green	CNPA Board
Ian Hooper	Scottish Executive
Cllr A Magee	The Highland Council
John Markland	Scottish Natural Heritage
Bob McIntosh	Forestry Commission
David Noble	The Highlands of Scotland Tourist Board
Nick Reiter	Deer Commission Scotland
Gordon Smith	Communities Scotland
Susan Walker	CNPA Board
Tim Walker	sportscotland
Mike Webster	Scottish Enterprise Tayside
Susan Williamson	Historic Scotland
Cllr Bob Wilson	The Moray Council
Douglas Yule	Moray Badenoch and Strathspey Enterprise

Apologies

Ian Dunlop	Aberdeen & Grampian Tourist Board
Cllr Rob Murray	Angus Council

In Attendance

Nick Halfhide	CNPA - Head of Strategic Policy & Programme Management
Jane Hope	CNPA - Chief Executive
Don McKee	CNPA - Head of Planning & Development Control
Fiona Newcombe	CNPA - Head of Natural Resources

Welcome

1. Andrew Thin welcomed everyone to the inaugural meeting of the Cairngorms National Park's Advisory Panel on Joined Up Government, and noted apologies from Ian Dunlop and Councillor Murray.

Discussion of the Panel's Role and Remit

2. Andrew Thin introduced this item noting that the National Park has a very broad remit with aims that range from environmental protection, through visitor enjoyment, to the social and economic development of local communities. The CNPA's role is primarily as an enabler, directly delivering only planning and access services within the Park. The four aims of the National Park will therefore only be achieved if all of the key stakeholders, particularly those in the public sector, can be pulled together.
3. The Park Plan is the key mechanism for brigading the public sector more effectively. It is a statutory document required under Sections 11 - 14 of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000, and will be the main document to guide the coordination and integration of the Park's management. It will prepare and promote a shared agenda, avoiding duplication and waste, ensuring a successful future for the Park.
4. The National Parks Act also requires the CNPA to set up one or more Advisory Groups. The Advisory Panel on Joined Up Government is the first of these Advisory Groups, and its role is to ensure a high level of coordination between the public sector organisations as the crucial foundation for preparing, and then implementing the Park Plan. Four other Advisory Groups, one for each aim of the Park, are planned.
5. In the following discussion, the need for a more coordinated approach by the public sector to achieve the four aims of the Park was broadly supported. The following additional points were made:
 - The Panel should discuss key strategic issues appropriate for this level of representation, and not duplicate discussions held at an officer level.
 - The Panel has a useful role to reflect on the progress of the National Park based on useful management information and key indicators.
 - The Panel can help to prioritise priorities across the public sector in relation to the National Park, and help resolve issues stuck at officer level.
 - The Panel also has a role in helping senior figures within the public sector organisation to stay in touch with the process of developing the National Park, and with each other.

Presentation on the Park Plan

6. Nick Halfhide, Head of Strategic Policy and Programme Management, gave a presentation which outlined the role of the Park Plan; how the CNPA aims to put it together; and the role of the other public bodies in its construction and implementation.
7. The statutory requirements are set out in Sections 11 - 14 of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. In particular Section 11 requires the CNPA to prepare and submit to Scottish Ministers a Park Plan setting out its policy for:
 - a) *managing the National Park; and*
 - b) *co-ordinating the exercise of -*
 - i. *the Authority's functions in relation to the National Park; and*

- ii. *the functions of other public bodies and office-holders so far as affecting the National Park.*

This must be done with a view to ensuring that the 4 aims of the Park are collectively achieved in a co-ordinated way.

8. Section 12 sets out the requirements for consulting on the draft Plan and submission to Scottish Ministers. Section 13 requires the Park Authority to review the Plan every five years, and Section 14 states that:

The Scottish Ministers, a National Park authority, a local authority and any other public body or office-holder must, in exercising functions so far as affecting a National Park, have regard to the National Park Plan ...

9. The CNPA is currently clarifying with the Scottish Executive the relationship of the Park Plan to the planning system, and also seeking further guidance on applying the Strategic Environmental Assessment regulations.
10. The Park Plan is the key strategic document for the National Park. Once it has been approved by Scottish Ministers, all other plans to the Park must take a lead from it. It will be delivered through the CNPA, Scottish Ministers and the other public sector bodies in the Park. It will also have a strong influence on the activities on the private, voluntary and community sectors in the Park.
11. If it is to be effective, it must do more than simply state existing policies; it must examine and add value to them, ensuring a more joined up approach to the Park's management.
12. The CNPA is currently drawing together existing information about the Park into the State of the Park Report, and identifying indicators to assess the "health" of the Park in relation to the four aims. The CNPA will then be coordinating a programme of work to identify visions for the aims of the Park, and within the context of existing policies for the area and public sector spend, identify strategic objectives for the area's management, and what actions need to be taken to achieve these. This work will be undertaken in an inclusive and consultative way.
13. The current tentative timetable is to complete a consultation draft of the Park Plan by Easter 2005, consult widely on the plan during spring of 2005, and submit to Ministers in the autumn of 2005.
14. Public sector bodies in the Park need to help put the Plan together, and once it is in place, then to deliver it, and take an active role in its monitoring and evaluation, and subsequent adjustment.

Discussion on the Park Plan Process

15. Following the presentation, members of the Panel broadly endorsed the approach suggested.

16. They observed the strong parallels with the community planning process, and noted that the two processes must be integrated.

Key issues that the Park Plan needs to address

17. Andrew Thin invited members to make brief statement setting out the key issues which the Park Plan needs to cover. The following main points were made:
 - The National Park was designated because of the national importance of its special qualities. The Park Plan needs to balance a number of key issues, in particular enjoyment, conservation and development; and the national as well as the local perspective.
 - Scottish Ministers are in the process of issuing guidance to the National Park Authorities on the production of the Park Plans.
 - The Scottish Executive has approved the priorities set out in the CNPA's Corporate Plan for 2004-07, and leading from this has provided resources at an appropriate level to the CNPA.
 - SNH is currently undertaking a review of natural heritage information for the Cairngorms National Park, and this will be ready soon.
 - Many of the public bodies represented at the meeting are constrained by their remit in looking at some of the issues in the Park holistically; the CNPA is not constrained in this way and so has a clear role in leading on these discussions. This particularly relates to the first aim of the Park where natural heritage and cultural heritage issues are interlinked.
 - There is much scope to draw out the significance and potential of the area's cultural heritage.
 - Sustainable demographics are very important, to which affordable housing makes a very important contribution. Low cost housing is important at underpinning the future of the National Park, and the Cairngorms Housing Strategy has already made a start at finding innovative solutions.
 - The second aim of the National Park, promoting the sustainable use of the area's natural resources, is key for Scottish Water. They are currently working on their Plan for 2006 onwards, known as Quality and Standards 3. They need to engage now with the CNPA to ensure that the big infrastructure issues are discussed and solutions identified.
 - The Park Plan needs to be an integrating tool, not just a collection of existing policies.
 - Tourism in the Park is very important, both locally and to the national product. The Park Plan will be a good tool for promoting what the National Park can contribute to

the Scottish Tourism Product, and equally for outlining how the Scottish approach can be made to work at a more local level within the Park.

- Community empowerment in the National Park is already well developed, and this is a significant resource for implementing the Park Plan.
- There are a number of existing documents, eg the Forest and Woodland Framework and Indicative Forestry Strategies, which can provide the basis for elements of the Park Plan.
- The strength of the local economy is fundamental to delivering all of the aims of the Park. The Park Plan should not bind the partners and thereby restrict their activities, but they should be brought into the process and its implementation.

Partner Commitment and Joint Working

18. The organisations represented round the table agreed to work together with the CNPA to produce and then implement the Park Plan. Nick Halfhide is the main contact within the CNPA for the Park Plan.
19. In particular, they agreed to make available information to contribute to the State of the Park Report research, and the CNPA's investigation of current public spending in the Park.
20. It was agreed it would be helpful if a contact list of those present were circulated with the minutes.

Date of Next Meeting

21. It was agreed that the Panel should only meet when it had issues to discuss. This is likely to be early in 2005 once the Park Plan is more advanced, but before the formal public consultation.

The meeting finished at 12.30pm.