

**CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

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**FOR DECISION**

**Title: PLANNING SERVICE PRIORITIES 2016/17**

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**Purpose of Report**

To review progress over the last year and to ask the Planning Committee to consider and approve the proposed planning service improvements for 2016/17.

**Summary**

The Planning Committee considers a set of planning service improvements to be delivered each year as part of our pro-active approach to performance improvement. During 2015/16 the planning service delivered against 10 of the 11 priorities that had been identified for the year. For the year ahead, 10 service improvements are proposed. Once approved, these will be included in individual staff work programmes for 2016/17.

**Recommendation**

**That the Planning Committee consider and approve the proposed planning service improvements for 2016/17.**

## Background and Context

1. In April 2015, the Planning Committee approved planning service improvement priorities for 2015/16. These improvement priorities have informed the work of the planning service during 2015/16 and are an important part of the CNPA's Planning Performance Framework (PPF) report. The planning service now needs improvement priorities to steer work over the coming year. Clearly, these are improvement priorities that complement and enhance the core planning services (development plan preparation and delivery, development management, monitoring and enforcement) the CNPA delivers. They are not a substitute for that work, but about doing it in better ways to deliver better outcomes for customers and the CNPA.

## Review of Service Priorities from 2015/16

2. The 11 service improvements agreed by the Planning Committee in April 2015 are shown in Table 1 below, along with a brief progress report on delivery.

<b>Table 1</b>		<b>Summary of Progress</b>
<b>CNPA Planning Service Improvements 2015/16</b>		
1	Undertake feedback exercise with Community Council/Association Planning Representatives Network (PRN) on recent LDP process to improve ease of engagement for next LDP	<b>Completed</b> Feedback exercise undertaken and will be revisited at future PRN events
2	Establish plan for Enforcement Officer role from July 2015	<b>Completed</b> Ed Swales appointed.
3	Undertake skills audit of planning team and establish a prioritised training/enhancement plan, including training activities on natural heritage skills and advice, delivery of the new LDP for the Park, and planning support training on Uniform administration and template modification	<b>Completed</b> Training needs identified through staff appraisals and delivered throughout year.
4	Put in place procedure for CNPA member involvement in pre-application discussions	<b>Completed</b> Dec 2015
5	Enter Scottish Government/RTPI Awards for Quality in Planning	<b>Completed</b> Awards entered May 2015
6	Investigate establishment of a Design Panel for the Park	<b>Completed</b> Design Panel not considered to be effective tool for improving standards of design at this point in time.
7	Review internal consultation procedures for specialist advice	<b>Started</b> Full brief for review undertaken but Review itself taking place in early 2016/17

<b>Table 1</b>		<b>Summary of Progress</b>
<b>CNPA Planning Service Improvements 2015/16</b>		
8	Plan for Cairngorms Design Awards competition in 2016 to coincide with the themed year on Innovation, Architecture and Design	<b>Completed</b> Design Awards competition to be launched late April 2016
9	Add to series of Cairngorms Planning Advice Notes to provide easy to read customer-focused advice	<b>Completed</b> New Planning Advice Note on Pre-Application Advice in the National Park published May 2015, other PANs updated.
10	Implementation of a Scottish Government Pilot Project to use a new Town Centre Toolkit to improve the town centre vitality and viability	<b>Completed</b> Report finalised March 2016.
11	Review customer satisfaction feedback survey	<b>Completed</b> New, targeted survey ready for launch at end of March 2016

- We will update the Planning Committee with a comprehensive report on PPF delivery and performance later in 2016. Planning staff are pleased with the last year's work and progress, particularly as it was a year of high staff turnover, significant development management and enforcement casework and significant work in preparing for the next National Park Partnership Plan.

### Service Priorities for 2016/17

- The proposed planning service improvements for 2016/17 are shown in Table 3. The new improvements have been discussed within the staff team and also aim to respond to general feedback received from stakeholders, including through the Planning Representatives Network and the Developers Forum. The proposed priorities build upon the progress that has been made in previous years.

<b>Table 3</b>	
<b>Proposed 2016/17 Planning Service Improvements</b>	
1	<b>Consolidate existing processes and procedures</b> (making sure past improvements become established practice and behavior)
2	<b>Review internal consultation procedures for specialist advice</b> (completing the priority identified in 2015/16)
3	<b>Support move to an electronic/paperless Planning Committee</b> (reducing costs and improving efficiency)
4	<b>Plan and deliver a Planning Committee training programme</b> (learning from past cases, improving understanding of current issues and practice)
5	<b>Consolidate delegated authority provisions</b> (to provide certainty for Committee and officers and ensure efficient operation of service)

**Table 3**

**Proposed 2016/17 Planning Service Improvements**

6	<b>Carry out a review of infrastructure requirements for allocated development sites</b> (improving the CNPA's ability to deliver the Local Development Plan and Action Programme)
7	<b>Complete the Design Awards 2016 competition</b> (raising awareness, understanding and expectations of good design)
8	<b>Undertake a programme of Town Centre Health checks</b> (building on lessons learnt through Grantown Town Centre Pilot Project)
9	<b>Develop a series of standard planning conditions</b> (to provide consistency for development management, monitoring and enforcement)
10	<b>Prepare and implement standard legal agreement templates</b> (to improve efficiency in concluding legal agreements)

**Next Steps**

5. Once the service improvements are approved, staff will incorporate them into the Planning Service Unit Plan for the year and into individual's work plans. The Planning Committee receives updates on planning service performance, including an update on delivery of the service improvement priorities in May and November.

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**April 2016**

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