
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: PARK BRAND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

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Purpose

This paper seeks to update the CNPA Board on the strategy to roll out the Park Brand. It follows an update the Board received in February 2007 and provides additional update on development of family brands and management of risks.

In addition to the Brand update mentioned above, the paper seeks approval of revised terms of reference for the Brand Management Group.

Recommendations

That the Board:

- 1) Note progress in the development of a management strategy for the 'family' of brands**
- 2) Agree the Terms of Reference for the Brand Management Group**

Executive Summary

The Park Brand is a very valuable asset that can help promote the Park to a range of audiences and further increase uptake of quality and environmental standards. It can reinforce interpretive work, create a sense of place and help orientate visitors within the Park. It has huge potential to help a range of partners engage with, and support delivery of, the aims of the Park.

A number of 'family brands' have been developed by the Brand Management Group including the Cairngorms Farmers Market and Aviemore & the Cairngorms Destination Management Ltd. While the Brand Management Group believe that there are significant benefits of this approach, working in partnership with others, a number of risks were also identified. These included possible dilution of the National Park Brand and possible confusion of visitors. CNPA staff undertook to bring an update back to the Board detailing how these issues will be managed. Additional expert advice has been commissioned from NavyBlue Design Group, who worked on the initial development of the Park Brand in 2004.

The advice from NavyBlue notes a number of risks and opportunities that could arise from developing a family approach to branding but places great stress on the risks. Their report has only just been received in draft and has yet to be discussed further. The outcome of that discussion will be reported verbally to the Board meeting on 15 June together with proposed next steps.

PARK BRAND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT – FOR DECISION

Background

1. The development of a Cairngorms Brand was widely supported by the tourism industry as a means of presenting a coherent visual identity, based on agreed brand values for the Park area. A strong brand will provide a useful tool in the delivery of a wide range of marketing and promotional activity, both on a Park-wide basis and by individual businesses/ organisations, the latter being subject, along with all other users, to the satisfaction of certain criteria including environmental and quality standards. (Board paper June 2004)
2. The Park Brand was launched in February 2005. It drew upon a “Brand Wheel” that had been developed with key stakeholders from the tourism industry and which sought to encapsulate what a Cairngorms Brand should stand for in terms of how it should make people view and feel about the Cairngorms National Park.



3. In a world of increasingly sophisticated international competition, many sectors of the Park’s economy are seeking competitive advantage by identifying themselves with the National Park and the quality that this implies. The Park Brand is a visible way of demonstrating this link and has been welcomed. It is recognised as an asset, not only to the business community, but to public sector partners and Park communities. Currently the brand identity is being used by 115 organisations across the Park. This ‘buy-in’ has, in comparison with similar initiatives across the country, been very successful and is considered one of the major achievements of CNPA.
4. The tourism sector has been most active in using the Brand to date, but CNPA see huge potential for its use by a range of other business sectors. Public partners too, most notably SNH and VisitScotland have been quick to recognise the importance of the Park brand and have taken steps to integrate the brand identity into the work they do within the Park, for example:
 - a) all new interpretation panels planned by SNH within the Park will be branded with the Park brand identity;
 - b) advertisements placed by SNH which relate directly to activity within the Park will now be branded with the Park brand identity
 - c) The Cairngorms National Park Visitor Guide is produced in partnership with VisitScotland uses the Park brand identity because they recognise the value it gives in identifying the geographic area quite clearly.
5. The intention is, through the provision of a visual identity that the Cairngorms Brand will enhance, not replace, existing strong brands operating in the area. It will

provide an additional marketing tool for businesses and will act as an umbrella for the diverse communities of interest in the Park area and in this way support the delivery of the aims of the Park. (Board paper Feb 2005)

6. A paper was presented to the CNPA Board in February 2007 updating the Board on progress the Brand Management Group were making on rolling out and implementing the Brand. This raised a number of issues relating to the Brand and development of a family approach to brands. The Board noted progress but expressed concerns regarding possible diffusion of the Brand, and possible confusion for visitors.
7. This paper updates the Board on issues relating to brand use including: design and eligibility; risk management approach for family brands; proposals for consumer research and terms of reference for the Brand Management Group.

Issues/Discussion

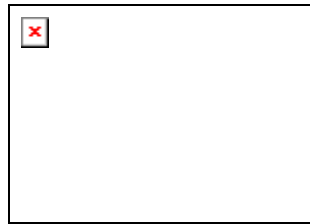
Role of the Brand in delivering the Park Plan

8. The National Park Plan describes a vision for the Park as '*renowned international destination...with fantastic opportunities to enjoy its special qualities...that makes a significant contribution to local regional and national identity*'.
9. In delivering this vision, the Park Brand plays a significant and vital role. It can provide marketing benefits and competitive advantage to businesses within the Park, encourage promotion of special qualities or products of the Park and reinforce the positive emotions we want people to associate with the Park. In a subtle though important way, it can also help engage a range of partners in coordinated delivery of the Park Plan.
10. The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism, awarded to the Park in September 2005 provides a framework within which our tourism activities and those of our partners are planned. The Brand will feature strongly in work designed to achieve the following Park Plan outcomes:
 - a) More people across Scotland will be more aware of the National Park, what makes it special and the opportunities it offers them.
 - b) Everyone will know when they have arrived in the National Park and have positive feelings about arriving in a special place
 - c) The visitor experience in the National Park will consistently exceed expectations and will drive repeat visits
 - d) A greater percentage of people will contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the Park.
 - e) A greater percentage of businesses will meet the quality standards and environmental management criteria of the Park brand and achieve commercial advantage through its use.

11. CNPA has extremely limited ability to market and promote the Park directly. Our efforts must be focussed on working in partnership with others to promote the area and key messages about the special qualities.
12. The principles behind our marketing approach are of working as an enabling organisation, working in partnership with other agencies, communities and businesses. We rely on VisitScotland, Destination Management Organisations, public sector partners and the 1000 tourism businesses in the Park to promote the area.

Development of Family Approach to Brands

13. During the last 12 months discussion have taken place with a number of private, voluntary and community organisations looking to integrate their visual image with the Park Brand. Examples such as the Cairngorms Farmers Market below demonstrate added value for both the Farmers Market and for the Park. The Farmers Market benefits through tie-in with the strong National Park Brand and values it represents. There are also strong benefits to the Park in terms of aligning a strong product of the Park with the visual identity of the area.



14. The Brand Management Group believe that this approach of developing family brands adds to and strengthens the Park Brand and helps reduce confusion and clutter of brands around the Park.
15. Development of Family Brand approach has been linked to the same stringent quality and environmental performance standards as the National Park Brand. For most tourism businesses, this means being quality assured by VisitScotland and being members of the Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS) or achieving membership within a year.
16. A paper was presented to the CNPA Board in February 2007 updating the Board on progress the Brand Management Group were making on rolling out and implementing the Brand. The Board noted progress but expressed concerns regarding possible diffusion of the Brand, and possible confusion for visitors. CNPA staff informed the Board in January that further work would be undertaken and this paper presents that work to date.
17. It should be noted that work on branding policy is not complete and following expert advice from NavyBlue requires further development and consultation.

Risks and Benefits

18. Initial advice from NavyBlue suggests that some of the issues raised regarding dilution of the brand and negative brand equity are very real threats indeed. Their advice, however, is very much based on analogies with marketing and branding of consumer products. While these undoubtedly provide useful lessons, we are not yet convinced their advice adequately reflects our very different situation. The Park Brand is not solely the CNPA's – it is explicitly for use by our partners, and is an almost unique tool for us to endorse and reward the partnerships on which the Park's success depends. While we do not want to 'dilute' the quality associated with the brand identity, we have to accept we do rely on others to raise its profile
19. NavyBlue recognise that sub-branding can be useful and can help by:
 - a) strengthening and updating a brand through addressing new consumer opportunities
 - b) enabling an organisation to rapidly build market acceptance

However, they also point out that in taking such an approach:

- c) The parent brand equity may be diluted
 - d) The parent brand has not established sufficient equity to support the sub-brands and therefore the brand association will not be clear
20. Ongoing work, including discussion with the partner organisations which have already aligned their visual identity with the brand, will identify how the Brand Management Group deals with both the positive and negative issues.
21. A family approach to branding has been developed and approved in three instances. Aviemore & Cairngorms DMO; Tomintoul & Glenlivet Highland Holidays; and the Cairngorms Farmers Market. CNPA always reserves the right to withdraw approval for use of the brand. It is unlikely that we would be able to follow this purely hard line approach without helping support and assist groups to develop new brand identities.
22. There are a number of issues that would need to be worked through for these groups to look at re-branding in a way which would address issues raised by NavyBlue including cost, timescale, and agreement of their membership / board.
23. Whilst the development work on branding is being undertaken, the Brand Management Group will not develop any further 'family' sub-brands.

Next Steps

24. The Brand Management Group has been invited to meet with NavyBlue **on Monday 11th June** to discuss implication of NavyBlue advice and develop an approach for existing family brands.

25. Meetings with key stakeholders will be set up to explore how an approach to branding can be developed that will be of benefit to groups within the Park and the Park itself.
26. Consumer advice will be commissioned in early 2008 and will explore the issues identified and agreed at the meeting on 11th June with NavyBlue.

Recommendation

27. **That the Board note progress in developing management strategy for Family Brands and timescale for consumer research**

Park Brand and the Brand Management Group

28. The Park Brand was launched in February 2005 and a Brand Management Group (BMG) was established and given delegated powers to 'roll out and implement the Brand.' It is classed as a semi-autonomous group of the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA).
29. Initial work of the BMG focussed on setting criteria and agreeing codes of conduct for a range of sectors including: tourism business; eating establishment; outdoor activity provider; wildlife operator; golf course; event; community / tourist association; non-edible produce; edible produce. Attention of the BMG is now turning to increasing uptake of the Brand (and consequently increasing quality and environmental accreditation).
30. The BMG is currently composed of three CNPA Board members, representatives from the Association of Cairngorms Community Councils, Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce, VisitScotland and CNPA staff drawn from Economic & Social Development and Communications teams.
31. The recommendation is that overall management of the brand strategy remains with the CNPA Board. The remit of the BMG will be to oversee the implementation of the strategy. This will include:
 - a) Advising the CNPA and other relevant bodies on the rollout and implementation of the CNP brand;
 - b) Updating the board on the implementation of the brand strategy;
 - c) Determining actions relating to the use of the CNP brand in various sectors.
32. Over the last 2 years attendance by some Board members has been patchy. Lack of consistent attendance and input is of concern to the BMG. The Brand is a vital element of the Park and of the Park Plan and commitment of the Board to the work of the BMG is crucial.
33. It is proposed that the CNPA Board will nominate a pool of 5 Board members to serve on the BMG. Members will be expected to attend four meetings a year.

34. The current Chair has served 2 years and under the terms of reference for the BMG, an election must now be held. This will happen at the next meeting of the BMG.
35. BMG composition
- a) Sally Dowden, Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce (Chair)
 - b) Alistair Gronbach, Head of Brand Marketing, VisitScotland
 - c) Bell Macaulay, Coordinator, Association of Cairngorms Communities
 - d) CNPA Board x 5
 - e) CNPA Staff:
 - Chris Taylor, Tourism & Economic Development Manager
 - Peter Crane, Senior Visitor Services Officer
 - Fiona Milligan, Marketing Officer

Recommendations

36. **That the Board:**
- a) **agree the updated BMG Terms of Reference (appended)**
 - b) **nominate members wishing to serve on the BMG by 29th June**

Consultation

37. At the time of writing there has not been the opportunity for consultation. The process is on-going however and consultation has been arranged with a number of stakeholders.

Policy Context

38. The Park Brand has a vital role to play in helping deliver several policy areas. It makes a substantial contribution to the sustainable tourism strategy and action plan. It helps deliver CNPA Outdoor Access and Interpretive Strategies, (particularly around interpretation, visitor information, signage and Points of Entry) and supports the Communications Strategy.

Delivering Sustainability

39. The Park Brand has a big role to play in delivering sustainability. It helps raise quality and standards through eligibility criteria. In helping to engage a range of partners under the umbrella of the Brand it can achieve greater buy-in and longer term commitment to delivering the Park Plan. Indeed this was the ethos behind using the Brand on the cover of the Park Plan itself.

Delivering A Park for All

40. The CNPA are currently developing a project to attract more people on low incomes, people of all abilities and young people into the Park. We recognise that the Brand has huge opportunities beyond tourism. CNPA will work with Inclusive Cairngorms to explore wider opportunities for the Brand.

Delivering Economy, Effectiveness and Efficiency

41. The strong link between the Brand and quality standards helps 'lever' other objectives such as uptake of the Green Tourism Business Scheme. Greater alignment of this work will deliver greater efficiency and effectiveness. Working with groups such as DMOs and through other partners allows us to convey messages about the special qualities and raise awareness and understanding of the Park in a more cost – effective way than working alone.

Implications***Financial Implications***

42. There may well be financial implication in working with users of existing family brands to assist in any re-branding. There may also be financial implications arising from the consumer research which was originally budgeted for in 2008/9. These implications will be assessed further in due course.

Presentational Implications

43. How the Park Brand is managed, presented to visitors and residents and allowed to be used by third parties has a large bearing on how the CNPA and the CNP are perceived.
44. There are significant presentation risks arising from NavyBlue's recommendations that the Brand Management Group will consider. The credibility and reputation of CNPA, the Board and the Brand Management Group could be affected unless the process of managing family brands is handled sensitively

Implications for Stakeholders

45. The Park Brand has successfully enabled buy-in from a range of partners to the aims of the Park. The Park Plan uses the Brand to demonstrate this commitment and partnership approach to delivery of the Plan. The Brand Management Group believed that use of the 'family' Brand has the potential to achieve the same end in a more subtle way. For example, it allows the Cairngorms Farmers' Market to strengthen their own identify and at the same time align their Branding to that of the Park. It has proved a successful way of engaging with groups and highlights the potential for continuing to do so.
46. The advice from NavyBlue suggests that this balance has swung too far in favour of the family brand user and is not giving sufficient benefit to the Park. The Brand Management Group will consider implications arising from this advice. There would however be significant implications for stakeholders who have already had approval to use a family brand. There could be a cost to developing new brands, time and staff need to be allocated.

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Appendix i

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK BRAND MANAGEMENT GROUP

Terms of Reference

Structure

1. The Cairngorms National Park Brand Management Group (BMG) is an implementation group of the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA). It will act in an advisory capacity to the CNPA Board and staff.

Remit

2. Overall management of the brand strategy remains with the CNPA Board. The remit of the BMG will be to oversee the implementation of the strategy. This will include:
 - a) Advising the CNPA and other relevant bodies on the rollout and implementation of the CNP brand;
 - b) Updating the board on the implementation of the brand strategy;
 - c) Determining actions relating to the use of the CNP brand in various sectors.

Membership

3. The BMG will consist of representatives from the Association of Cairngorms Communities, the Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce, VisitScotland, 5 CNPA board members and relevant CNPA staff.
4. Each organisation will be able to nominate a substitute representative, to ensure that they have representation at every meeting.
5. The group will always try to achieve consensus. In the event of consensus not being reached a decision will be put to a vote. All members of the BMG are eligible to vote.
6. Specialist interests and advice will be sought on an 'as needed' basis and may be co-opted to join the BMG for as long as required.

Channels of Communication

7. There will be two-way communication between the CNPA and the BMG.
8. The BMG will:
 - a) provide regular updates to the Awareness & Understanding Advisory Group;
 - b) feed into the CNPA Board through the CNPA Board representatives on the group; and
 - c) maintain links with CNPA staff through the Marketing Officer

Meetings

9. The BMG shall meet every three months and as required, to be reviewed annually.

CNPA Support

10. Administrative support will be provided by the CNPA through the Marketing Officer.
11. Financial support will be provided and managed by the CNPA, at a level to be determined by the CNPA, and reviewed annually.
12. Financial support will cover costs in holding meetings and travelling to meetings for BMG members who are unable to claim the costs from the organisations they represent.

Officers

13. The BMG will nominate and select a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson from their numbers. Their term of office will be 2 years with a right to re-election for a maximum of 2 terms. Thereafter a 2 year period must follow before re-election.
14. The CNPA Marketing Officer will provide secretariat functions to the BMG.

General

15. Any changes to these terms of reference must be brought before the CNPA Board.

Cairngorms National Park Brand Management Group
May 2007