
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: VOCATIONAL TRAINING SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Prepared by: Claire Ross, Education and Inclusion Manager
John Thorne, Economic Development Officer
Kate Christie, LBBTP Manager

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to update the Board on our vocational training support projects to date, and to look forward to further actions with partners.

Recommendations

That the Board:

- a) Note the background to the vocational skills work and the current activity.

Executive Summary

There have been two previous Board papers on vocational training. The first in July 2005 initiating several pieces of research to identify barriers and opportunities in promoting vocational training from a number of perspectives: businesses, training providers and young people. The second paper was delivered in August 2006 when a four pronged action plan was recommended to the Board and agreed on as a result of the research findings.

The role of progressing these actions has been the task of a steering group including all Sector Skills Councils through Lantra, SQA, Forestry Commission Scotland, the Enterprise Network, the Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce, schools and colleges.

There has been considerable progress made on the actions outlined in the previous Board paper, under the umbrella of CATS (Cairngorms Action on Training and Skills). A Schools Liaison post started in February 2007. Development of a SVQ level 2 Rural Skills Apprenticeship is underway. A bursary scheme was launched in January 2007, with a Park Skills Passport now existing as part of the Bursary Scheme. There are also links to Volunteer Cairngorms.

Future actions will focus on reviews of the bursary scheme with external partners in late-2007, the schools liaison officer in mid-2008, and the progression of business skills support schemes.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE – FOR INFORMATION

Background

1. The CNPA undertook to establish a vocational training scheme within 3 years in its first Corporate Plan, which it has done through a series of projects.
2. The objectives were to:
 - a) address the seasonality of jobs in the Park
 - b) help build careers based on multiple jobs and multi-skilling
 - c) provide and promote local vocational training choices
 - d) deal with barriers to businesses and trainees in vocational training
3. The August 2006 Board Paper reported on 3 pieces of research to consider: the training needs of school leavers (Irene McDonald Associates); the training provision in the Park (Basil +); the skills needs of local businesses (Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce). From this work, CNPA initiated the following projects to help target issues in each of the three areas.

Schools Liaison Officer

4. In conjunction with Lantra and Highland Council, and co-funded with the Scottish Executive, CNPA now support an officer, Maxine Garson, whose role is to help every school in the Park push vocational skills career pathways. Outcomes of the project include:
 - a) Parents, teachers and pupils will be made more aware of vocational career paths related to the aims of the Park
 - b) Schools will network, promoting best practice and supporting each other.
 - c) Links between schools, businesses and communities will be strengthened.CNPA funding extended what was a Highland Council area only project into all seven secondary schools that have catchments in the Park, and created a more practically based approach to support.

The project has at its heart the need to make the vocational skill path more visible to young people, and to provide them with local training and job opportunities.
5. The John Muir Award is being used in conjunction with the Rural Skills National Progression Awards in schools promoted through the schools liaison officer. Encouraging pupils to examine their own personal connection to the land creating a sense of ownership and stewardship in potential future land managers. The John Muir Award Manager is involved in training sessions for teachers and other stakeholders who will be involved in delivering the National Progression Awards.

SVQ Level 2 Rural Skills Apprenticeship

6. CNPA joined the Highland Skills Strategy Group in early 2006, which includes a wide variety of private and public sector organisations. This group identified the need for a bridging qualification between the new National Progression Awards at age 16-20, and specialised SVQ Level 3 Modern Apprenticeships. CNPA sits on a sub-group which is developing this bridging qualification at SVQ level 2 as a land-based rural skills apprenticeship, which will cover areas such as environmental conservation, land based skills, and links to sustainable tourism. CNPA funding has secured the Park as the pilot area, and helped focus the work towards the aims of the Park. It is expected to launch in autumn 2008. Following the pilot phase, national roll-out may result.
7. The project addresses need to multi-skill land-based workforces, and connects the career path between school vocational qualifications and specialised ones, providing more training and options for school leavers. It will help provide employers with the skilled workforce they require.

Business Support Schemes

8. One of the actions outlined in the previous board paper was to develop a business support scheme aimed at local businesses in providing work placements for young people. i.e. information and advice, assisting smaller businesses to overcome the bureaucratic barriers in taking on young people etc. it is important to highlight that the CNPA should be careful not to duplicate existing work of the Enterprise Network in this area. Currently CNPA officers are working with Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce to establish what business skills support can be given. Consideration is also being given to targeting specific sectors such as horticulture and outdoor activity providers, sectors which are key to achieving the aims of the Park.
9. Park business support schemes will add to the contribution made by the Enterprise Network to support businesses in accessing a more motivated, skilled and informed workforce.

Bursary Scheme

10. The scheme launched in January 2007 (UNDER Cairngorms Action for Training and Skills: CATS) in a pilot phase which will last until autumn 2007. It is providing bursaries to young people in vocational careers that help conserve and enhance the environment, help visitors enjoy the Park, and involve working on the land. This includes outdoor activity instructing. As the scheme launched in the winter months most support so far has been for trainee ski and snowboard instructors. The strength of this project is that it helps young people access "niche" training that they would not otherwise be able to. It is intended to have a full external evaluation with partners in October, which should ensure we attract more funding for future phases.

11. The bursary scheme becomes part of the vocational career path for young people; linking school programmes to the world of work, helping young people get the skills local businesses need.

Volunteering

12. Although not directly considered here, the pilot Volunteer Cairngorms scheme (BTCV and Project Scotland), which will be reviewed in the autumn, forms an important part of vocational skills support. Volunteering performs many functions, but crucially it connects local young people with the possibility of developing a range of rural skills (including communication skills) potentially allowing them to stay in the area if they choose.

Recommendation

13. **The Board is asked to note these actions.**

Policy Context

14. As has been outlined in previous papers, the CNPA's vocational training support project compliments a range of current national initiatives including: Skill Seekers, New Deal, Training for Work and Modern Apprenticeship schemes. It also builds on developments in the *"Curriculum for Excellence"*, in particular educational agendas like *"Determined to Succeed"* (encouraging business skills and entrepreneurship), *"Skills for Work"* and *"National Progression Awards"*.
15. The work clearly fits in with the Park Plan specifically under the Priority for Action, Making Tourism and Business more Sustainable: *"Develop training and other measures to better support the vocational skills requirements of businesses and residents in the Park"*. It also focuses on young people between the ages of 16-24 a group that has been endorsed as a priority by the Board in the Park for All Update paper (Oct 2006).

Delivering Sustainability and a Park for All

16. Vocational training can give real local opportunities for young people to both work and live in the Park. The projects so far are focusing on multi-skilling the workforce and providing them with an understanding of the conservation and visitor needs of the Park. It will help build confidence in our young people so that they can find positions with local businesses, or start their own businesses, to further strengthen the communities and the economy.
17. Vocational skills support is part of the overall support required for young people, and compliments CNPA and partner efforts to address a range of issues including accessible transport and affordable housing.

Delivering Economy, Effectiveness and Efficiency

18. CNPA must work with partners to deliver realistic skills programmes, and we are either working with partners on pilot projects, or in the case of the bursary scheme

aiming to involve partners in a later phase. Working in collaboration not only attracts more funding, but avoids duplication of effort and strengthens projects.

Implications

Financial Implications

19. This is all ongoing activity for which there is existing financial provision within the Operational Plan

Presentational Implications

20. All the projects mentioned above will be highlighted in the press, with CATS projects having already been reported in several press articles, both local and national. They are also being promoted directly through local secondary schools, youth groups etc.

Implications for Stakeholders

21. By using the Park as a pilot area for several projects with partnership support, we are working both to help partners achieve their objectives and deliver the aims of the Park Plan in a co-ordinated way.

Next Steps

22. The objectives in section 2, above, will remain core to the CATS scheme success. A review of the bursary will take place in October 2007, and the schools liaison officer will be reviewed in summer 2008. CNPA will continue to work with the Enterprise Network and other partners on business skills projects, and will report back to the Board in due course.

Claire Ross
John Thorne
Kate Christie
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claireross@cairngorms.co.uk
johnthorne@cairngorms.co.uk
katechristie@cairngorms.co.uk