

## **Cairngorms Visitor Guide 2007**

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**Purpose:** To prompt discussion on whether the *Park i* publication should be endorsed as the official Cairngorms Visitor Guide 2007

### **1. Background**

At the January 2006 ViSIT Forum meeting, a paper was presented outlining a number of options for the future production of the Cairngorms Visitor Guide. The discussion focused on the success of *Park i*, a commercially-produced guide launched last year which provides Park-wide information, much of which duplicates the information found in the Cairngorms Visitor Guide. Although a number of issues were raised about the benefits of having the two guides there was a general feeling from the Forum that where the private sector is providing visitor information, the public sector should not compete for advertising spend.

As a result, it was agreed that further investigation into the private sector taking on production of the Visitor Guide should take place, as an alternative to repeating the same format of the existing Visitor Guide in future years.

### **2. Cairngorms Visitor Guide 2004- 2006**

The Cairngorms Visitor Guide has been produced in the same format for the past three years. In general the Guide has been well received, and initial research to visitor reaction found that visitors liked the quality feel, limited advertising, and extensive imagery. However, some people felt that it was an inconvenient size. The 2006 Guide had a print run of 130,000, and due to a decrease in advertising income (thought largely to be the result of competition with *Park i*), the 2006 guide required a substantial public subsidy from CNPA and VisitScotland, which is not sustainable in the long term.

The Visitor Guide sits within a growing family of free publications about the Park. Each of these serves a different purpose and the content and distribution arrangements fit with that purpose. The most relevant other publications to note are:

- Park Welcome leaflet – recently revamped and produced with the Park brand image, distributed nationally by Landmark
- Cairngorms Countryside Events Guide – details of guided walks run by rangers services in the Park, distributed in and around the Park by Landmark
- Cairngorms Explorer – public transport timetable and walk/cycle suggestions, contains advertising, distributed in and around the Park and in main TICs nationally.

Other publications about the Park that may be of interest to Visitors include the leaflets about hill tracks (Scotways) and butterflies, etc. (Cairngorms Biodiversity Project).

### **3. *Park i***

Discussions have been held between the publisher of *Park i*, (Tony Brown of Ice Publishing), the CNPA and VisitScotland; and all are confident that an acceptable way forward can be found to enable *Park i* to become the official visitor guide to the Cairngorms National Park. It is also believed that that such a partnership will continue the aims of the original Guide, which is to inform visitors of places to visit, things to do and activities to undertake; persuade visitors to increase their length of stay and spend in the area; enhance visitors' enjoyment of their stay, encourage retention and dispersal of visitors; and encourage repeat business.

The following aspects are part of the proposal:

- *Park i* would continue to be produced in a pocket-size version with two editions, (winter and summer) with a total annual print run of 120,000. Distribution would be organised and paid for by VisitScotland through Landmark Press.
- Copy for the publication would be provided by staff from VS / CNPA, who would retain editorial control, to ensure that the same information that is currently contained in the visitor guide continues to be made available to visitors. Access to VS / CNPA's photo libraries for *Park i* imagery will also be given.
- A minimum of 60% of the guide would be editorial, with the remaining 40% (max) given to advertising.
- *Park i* would be endorsed by VisitScotland as the official Visitor Guide and all non-accommodation businesses in the Highland area who have purchased a business package with VisitScotland would be given a complimentary listing.
- As the guide would be endorsed by VisitScotland, only quality-assured businesses would be eligible for inclusion. This applies only to the accommodation sector, which is not the main focus of an at-destination guide.
- It is hoped that the venture will be self-financing, although it is recognised that a small subsidy may be necessary initially.

#### **4. Advantages and risks**

Endorsing *Park-i* as the official visitor guide for the Park would have the following main advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages:

- More effective use of public money
- Demonstration of effective partnership between public and private sector
- Less competition for tourism businesses' advertising spend

Risks/ Disadvantages:

- Heavy dependency on single commercial operator
- Loss of inspirational element of current visitor guide – large format with more images

#### **5. Advice sought:**

Given the earlier steer from the ViSIT Forum, the CNPA and VisitScotland feel that working together in partnership with the commercial sector to support an existing guide is the most cost-effective and sustainable use of resources. Therefore, it is proposed that *Park i* be endorsed as the official Cairngorms Visitor Guide for 2007. Views from Forum members are sought.

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