

Annex 1 – Summary of Survey Evidence about the Cairngorms National Park

1. Independent surveys carried out during 2010 and 2011 with visitors, the general public across Scotland and MSPs show that understanding and knowledge of the Park is steadily growing along with favourable attitudes towards the Cairngorms National Park and the Park Authority. These surveys allow us to evaluate and compare results with previous surveys to determine how effective our communications have been and where we should target future activities. In addition, the Business Barometer carried out by the CBP provides an indication of the local business views of the Park and Park Authority and the monitoring of media coverage provides a general impression of how the Park is being portrayed in the media.

Visitor Survey 2010-11

2. This survey was carried out by CELLO mruk research and investigated a range of aspects regarding visitors to the area. The summary of results below relates to views expressed about the National Park. Over 2500 people were interviewed. 82% (68% in 2003/04) of all visitors said that they were aware that they were in a National Park. 91% (88% in 2003/04) of visitors who said they were aware that they were in a National Park said that they knew this before arrival in the National Park. The influence of the area being a National Park over people's decision to visit the area is cited as being very or quite important by 51% (far higher than the 25% recorded in 2003/04) of respondents and only 21% (compared to 61% in 2003/04) said that it was not very or not at all important. Finally, 87% agreed that the Park seems well managed and cared for.

MSP Survey 2011

3. The survey of the Members of the Scottish Parliament is an annual survey, carried out by Ipsos MORI to measure and evaluate MSP knowledge and opinion of the Park and the CNPA. The MSP Survey ran from September to November 2011. A total of 81 MSPs (63%) took part in the face-to-face interviews (SNP 43 including six ministers, Labour 27, Conservative 6, Liberal Democrats 3 and Others 2). The results were favourable, particularly given the number of new MSPs and ministers that were appointed following the Scottish Parliament elections in May 2011. For a second year running everyone interviewed had heard of or knew the Cairngorms National Park – 14% heard of but knew nothing about the Park; 49% know just a little (+10% on 2010); 24 per cent know a fair amount (19% on 2010) and 10% know very well (+ 3% on 2010).
4. Crucially opinion/impression of the Cairngorms National Park has improved. The percentage of those who viewed the Park unfavourably dropped from 6% in 2010 to 0% in 2011. Those who view the Park as mainly favourably rose 3% to 44% and a further 8% are very favourable towards the Park (compared to 3% the previous year). This is broken down to 52% of the government being mainly favourable and 5% very favourable, again an increase on the previous year.

5. It is also encouraging that no MSP would be critical if asked about the Park, unlike the previous year when 5% said they would be critical if asked about the Park. In addition, 6% said they would speak highly about the Park without being asked (with the previous survey this scored 0). Whilst those who would speak highly if asked dropped from 34% to 31%, this is still well over a quarter of those questioned and should be considered in light of the new intake following the general election results and the wider findings. Awareness of the Park remains high amongst MSPs. A mean familiarity chart scored us at 0.6, along with organisations such as National Trust for Scotland, Morrison's, NHS and Glasgow 2014.

General Public Survey 2011

6. The Scottish Nature Omnibus is carried out twice a year by Scottish Natural Heritage to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of SNH communications, initiatives and programmes. The SNH survey was carried out during August and September by George Street Research and Why research. 1,055 people were surveyed. The survey looks at issues such as awareness and attitudes to biodiversity, the natural environment and caring about nature. The wider findings of the survey are useful and can support the Park and our and partners work as it also looks at areas such as volunteering, attitudes towards wildlife and the environment, supporting the economy (92% agree it is important for Scotland's economic future to look after our nature and landscapes), green travel and use of the outdoors.
7. Awareness of National Parks over the year has increased, from 79% in March to 84% in September. The number of people who were able to name the Cairngorms National Park rose one per cent to 34%. The findings support our work in promoting/raising awareness of National Parks as valuable national assets, with 90% of those questioned believing National Parks are valuable assets. Opinion of National Park Authorities is also high, with 70% of those questioned very or mainly favourable of NPAs. This is the highest of all organisations mentioned and level with RSPB Scotland and Historic Scotland.

CBP Business Barometer

8. The Cairngorms Business Barometer gathers data on a range of aspects, including views on the influence the National Park has on businesses and how well businesses feel supported by organisations including the CNPA on a quarterly basis. 119 businesses from across the Park participated in the survey.
9. Similar to last year (Q3 2010) but notably higher than that recorded two years ago, Q3 2011 results show businesses considered the Park as having a medium to high level of influence in attracting first and repeat customers. Businesses cited the Park as being more influential in attracting new markets rather than repeat ones. Most respondents indicated that the Park has a low level of influence on how they run their business and their levels of profitability. In contrast to last year (Q3 2010), businesses were more likely to acknowledge the role of the Park on their profits rather than their operations, although the Park was perceived to play a fairly limited role in both of these areas.

External Support

10. The perception of the level of business support provided by organisations operating across the Park was an average score of 4.4 out of 10. The role of CBP/DMOs continues to be perceived most positively at 5.5 whilst the lowest contribution score was attributed to Enterprise Organisations 3.3. CNPA's score in Q3 of 2011 was 5.1, an increase from 4.5 the previous year.

Media Coverage

11. The Park and the CNPA had a strong presence in national and local media during 2011. We monitor and evaluate media coverage, with monthly reports sent to staff and board, which allows us to track media coverage and reputation/opinion. The round-up for the last half of 2011 shows over three quarters of the media coverage about the Park and the CNPA was either positive or neutral. (Due to a change in the monitoring and evaluating system a full-year round up is not possible). 92 press releases and 46 press statements/comments were issued during the year. The Park enjoys continued good media nationally for its wildlife and environment and recreational opportunities and during 2012 there was also good coverage locally and nationally on the National Park Plan and Local Development Plan Main Issues consultation and associated events; the re-awarding of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism; and our position regarding proposed windfarms on the boundary of the National Park. Other areas of work gaining good coverage included Food for Life – allotments, grow cairngorms and adopt a chef; COAT path works and trainee scheme; the construction skills course; planning decisions – Green Lochan, Fords of Avon refuge and Glenlivet bike centre. Controversial issues included the Local Plan legal challenge/ An Camas Mor; Tesco in Aviemore; Boat of Garten housing; developer contributions and affordable housing policy and the A9 Crubenmore crossing.

1. Positive 66%
2. Negative 21%
3. Neutral 13%

