

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: CORPORATE PLAN 2005-2008 REPORT: THEME 4

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Purpose

To inform the Board of our work to date to achieve the fourth strategic theme of the Corporate Plan for 2005-08, and our plans for future activity.

Recommendations

- a) That the Board note the progress and plan for achieving the fourth theme of the Corporate Plan for 2005-08.

Executive Summary

The fourth theme of the Corporate Plan for 2005-08 states:

“To ensure our commitment to future generations we will look beyond the horizon and put in place plans to guide and co-ordinate the long-term integrated management of the Park”

The CNPA’s main work to date on this theme has concentrated on completing the National Park Plan and developing the Local Plan, and associated supplementary planning guidance. The implementation of the National Park Plan and completion of the Local Plan will be the focus of our work over the next 12 months.

CORPORATE PLAN REPORT: THEME 4 – FOR INFORMATION

Background

1. This is the fifth report on the fourth theme of the CNPA's Corporate Plan for 2005-08. The Board considered the fourth report in August 2007.
2. The fourth theme is:
 “To ensure our commitment to future generations we will look beyond the horizon and put in place plans to guide and co-ordinate the long-term integrated management of the Park”
3. This theme is concerned with providing strategic guidance focused on the area of the National Park. This guidance should help to integrate the four aims of the Park and look beyond the immediate, providing a policy framework in which all those involved in the management of the Park, including ourselves, can then develop more detailed activity.
4. This is an essential theme for the CNPA because it goes to the heart of our general purpose to ensure that the 4 aims of the Park are collectively delivered in a co-ordinated way; through setting out clear and long-term plans, we enable others to deliver. This helps us to provide focus for others and bring their actions more into line with one another; and in pulling these plans together, we provide leadership that is centred on the needs of the National Park.
5. Most of our forward planning efforts continue to concentrate on the National Park Plan and Local Plan, however, other work has resulted in the completion of the Outdoor Access Strategy, the Core Paths Plan which will go out for final consultation in April, the Forestry & Woodland Framework to be distributed in the Spring and the interpretation strategy for the Park. Work is currently underway to prepare a Moorland Framework and over the next Corporate Plan period a landscape scale framework for the Park will be produced.

National Park Plan

6. The National Park Plan met the schedule agreed by the Board in July 2004. The Board approved the draft plan for consultation in December 2005; Rhona Brankin MSP formally launched the consultation on 11th April 2006 which was successfully completed in June 2006. Feedback and comments were responded to and changes discussed before a final plan was endorsed by our public sector partners and submitted for ministerial approval in December 2006. The National Park Plan was approved without modification by Sarah Boyack MSP in March 2007 and formally adopted by the Board in April 2007. This marks a significant milestone for the Park and has been achieved through the hard work and commitment of many individuals from a wide range of organisations and interests and in particular by the hard work carried out by Nick Halfhide and Hamish Trench.

7. Mechanisms to support the implementation of the Park Plan have been agreed and put in place. Seven delivery teams with representation from various partner organisations focus on delivering the priorities for action outcomes by 2012. Delivery plans which indicate what actions will be taken by the CNPA and our partner organisations have been prepared and a monitoring framework agreed. At the end of each financial year an annual report will be prepared which demonstrates our collective achievements against the Park Plan – the first of which will be available in June 2008.
8. Following a review of our advisory forums, a slight re-alignment was made so that each forum reflects one of the three strategic objectives set out in the Park Plan; Conserving and Enhancing the Park, Living and Working in the Park, and Enjoying and Understanding the Park. The first meeting of all three advisory forums took place on Friday 28th September 2007 when Chairs for the revised forums were elected. A meeting with the Chairs in January has clarified what their role should be and how they can best meet the needs of the Park. It was agreed the forums should meet three times a year and the next meeting will take place in May 2008.
9. A strategy group, made up of the members of the Panel for Joined-up Government and the Chairs of the Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce, Association of Cairngorms' Communities, Scottish Environment LINK and a land manager representative, will focus on the longer term issues facing the Park. A meeting will be held in March 2008 which will focus on celebrating our achievements to date, aligning the National Park Plan outcomes with the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework, and focusing on the longer term opportunities and issues facing the Park. The Minister for Environment will be attending the meeting to share his views on how the Park can make a significant contribution towards delivering Scotland's strategic outcomes.

Local Plan

10. Following the decision of the Planning Committee on 4 May 2007 and the endorsement by the Board on 15 June 2007, the Cairngorms National Park Deposit Local Plan was published on 9 July 2007 with a consultation period running until 28 September 2007. The Local Plan was accompanied by the Environmental Report from the Strategic Environmental Assessment and the Consultation Report from the Consultative Draft. There were a number of drop-in sessions during the consultation to explain the plan and advise people on how to comment. Meetings also took place with a variety of partners.
11. Collation and analysis of responses to the consultation took longer than originally anticipated. There were 476 responses to the consultation raising objections on some 1500 separate issues. Objectors have been contacted and meetings have been taking place with a view to resolving as many objections as possible. At the Planning Committee on 8 February Members agreed to a revised timetable as the basis for taking the Local Plan forward towards adoption. Proposed modifications will be

presented to the Planning Committee on 30 May 2008 and agreement sought for publication for consultation during early summer. If only one round of modifications is required then there could be a Local Plan Inquiry in early 2009 with adoption by summer 2009.

Additional Planning Policy Activity

12. A contract was let during 2007 to Land Use Consultants for production of an updated Aviemore Master Plan taking account of current circumstances and of the Deposit Local Plan. This is a partnership project with The Highland Council and HIE and has involved discussions with a number of parties in the area. The speed at which major applications have been coming forward in Aviemore has meant that the document has had to take them into account. As a consequence there has been some slippage in the timetable. The draft document will be received in early March 2008 and will be brought to the Planning Committee for agreement for consultation.
13. A contract was also let for work on the production of a Sustainability Checklist and Design Guidance. This has been completed and the work will be developed within the authority with a view to bringing it to the Planning Committee in early summer for agreement for consultation. There will be involvement of communities and the development industry to ensure that the end product is both practical and accepted.
14. There will be other pieces of work associated with the Local Plan, some of which will not be required until its adoption. The focus at present is on progressing the local plan modifications, but a precise programme will be prepared by the summer for other work. These will include an Action Plan for the Local Plan's implementation, a protocol with the 4 local authorities on developer contributions, a protocol with the 4 local authorities for consistent implementation and use of the Local Plan, and a raft of supplementary planning guidance covering, for example, site development briefs, micro-generation/small-scale energy production, affordable housing provision.
15. Finally, the 2006 Planning Act requires the production of a Local Development Plan which will replace the current local plan. We will have to start work on this immediately following adoption of the local plan so that we can have the new style plan in place for 2011. The new plan will incorporate much of the local plan content, but will also have a strategic element that will replace current structure plans.

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