
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: CEO REPORT

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Purpose

- I. To highlight to Board members the main strategic areas of work that are being directed by Management Team. These are areas where significant staff resources are being directed to deliver with partners the aspirations of the National Park Partnership Plan.

Strategic Context

Conservation:

- a) **SRDP** – The CNPA has been involved in numerous groups including the CAP Strategic Board, CAP Stakeholders Group and prioritisation/targeting work. The agri-environment funding is likely to be the biggest source of funding for achieving the outcomes set out in Cairngorms Nature and the 2020 challenge. Ensuring the funding is focussed on the key priorities is crucial as is the ability to target the best placed land managers to deliver the desired outcomes.
- b) **Scottish Biodiversity Committee** – The CNPA Convenor represents both NPA's on the Scottish Biodiversity Committee. Hamish Trench also represents the Parks on the Monitoring and Delivery Group. Further staff from both NPA's sit on a range of sub-groups. The two NPA's are likely to be among the first that will sign Delivery Agreements associated with the 2020 Challenge.
- c) **River Spey catchment** – There is significant work being undertaken by the NPA at a senior level to ensure that the multiple issues associated with water abstraction on the Spey are joined up. This has involved meetings with landowners, SEPA, SNH and other interests.
- d) **A9** - The NPA is involved at an officer level in the specific work on the Kincaig – Dalraddy proposals and with work on the Strategic Environmental Assessment. Work has also been taken forward to establish senior engagement with Transport Scotland on this very important project for the Park and for Scotland.
- e) **Land owner meeting** – The 6 monthly liaison meeting with key landowners in the Park took place in December and a number of action points are being taken forward. One of these around the development of Estate Management Statements has been progressed and these will be made publicly available shortly.
- f) **Caper Framework** – Significant strand of work that will contribute to long term thinking on development, recreation and conservation.

Visitor Experience:

- a) **Glenmore and Cairngorm Mountain** – The NPA has been working with partners on the development of a masterplan for Glenmore/Cairngorm Mountain

within a wider partnership agreement. There is potentially resource implications for the NPA associated with the new operator at Cairngorm Mountain and the development of the masterplan.

- b) **Deeside Way** – The development of the Deeside way between Ballater and Braemar is an exciting opportunity. Work has started with consultants and with local organisations to identify a potential route.
- c) **Capital projects** – A significant proportion of staff time has been spent ensuring delivery of the ‘shovel-ready’ projects within the National Park. Senior oversight of this work has also been maintained to ensure delivery.
- d) **Capital Investment Plan** – This plan has been developed with the NPPP Strategic Delivery Group (see board paper)

Rural Development:

- a) **Development Management** – Developing and implementing a number of significant changes to the development management process to ensure an effective and efficient service. Progress made on a number of long running cases including Aviemore Tesco.
- b) **An Camas Mòr** – A significant amount of senior staff time has been spent working on the detail of the planning application and the development of the legal agreement for the development. This is likely to remain a significant resource issue for 2014/15 and future years
- c) **Local Development Plan** - Proposed LDP has been submitted to the DPEA, on time, and on budget
- d) **Local Plan Court Case** – A substantial amount of staff time and resource has been spent on the court proceedings, now at the UK Supreme Court.
- e) **Housing in the Park** – Work underway to consider approach to housing in the Park in light of draft policies set out in the draft Scottish Planning Policy and the development of the next LDP (2019 onwards)
- f) **Economic Development Strategy** – Discussion has been held with key organisations to try and ensure buy-in to the process and the implementation of the strategy.
- g) **LEADER** – Significant resource is going into closing down the current programme and developing the new programme.

Stakeholder Engagement:

- a) Joint Management Team meetings have been held with Highland Council, SNH, LLTTNPA and SEPA.
- b) Meetings at a senior level have also been held with organisations, such as, Scottish Enterprise, UHI, Community Broadband Scotland, BT, BRD, Aberdeenshire Council, VisitScotland, RDMO, CBP, SWT, RSPB.
- c) Joint CEO meeting of UK National Parks to discuss corporate sponsorship opportunities.
- d) A number of meetings with Scottish Government have taken place on a range of topics including the regular sponsor team meetings.

Communications:

- a) **Campaigns** - The communications campaigns for 2014 have been developed with input from Board and staff from across the organisation.
- b) **John Muir Conference** - Dedicated website and high profile speakers secured. Working in partnership with Loch Lomond & the Trossachs NPA, SNH, JMT and

NTS and with support funding from Event Scotland this is a major event which supports the Year of Homecoming programme of international events.

- c) **Digital Communications Review** - Improvements to the Park website, CNPA's web information and services and our use of social media. A report with recommendations to take this work forward is expected by the end of March.

Organisational Development:

- a) **Organisational Development Strategy** – The development of the Organisational Development Strategy has been taken forward by Management Team in consultation with staff and Board. This is an important internal strategy that will tie together all aspects of the organisation including Developing Leadership, Developing People, Developing Culture, Developing Facilities, Developing Knowledge and Developing Communications.
- b) **Organisational restructure** – The restructure of the NPA has been taken forward effectively and quickly and a settled team is now in place. This has been a significant change that has seen a reduction in senior posts and more resource allocated to key areas to deliver established priorities.
- c) **Relocation of Planning Service** - Following an internal consultation it has been confirmed that the re-location of the entire planning team from the Ballater office to Grantown will go-ahead. This process is significantly underway and will be completed in 2014/15.
- d) **Accommodation** – Proposals for the development of a hub office in Ballater are being developed with partners. The business case for accommodation changes is being developed for Scottish Government.

Upcoming Issues of Note:

- a) **Inverness and Loch Ness Tourism Business Improvement District** – The outcome of the vote on the 12 March could potentially have significant implications for the way that destination organisations are funded. The CNPA and CBP will need to take a view on this during 2014.
- b) **John Muir Conference** – 12/13 May
- c) **Finalised Scottish Planning Policy** – Likely to be issued around June 2014
- d) **Scottish Rural Parliament** – First rural parliament scheduled for November 2014 in Oban. The CNPA have been asked to sit on the Advisory Forum.

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