
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: Key Issues from the Sustainable Tourism Strategy Mid-term Review

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Purpose

To inform the board of work ongoing to address priority issues identified in the informal midterm review of the Cairngorms Sustainable Tourism Strategy.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board note the work ongoing to address the key issues raised in the midterm review of the Cairngorms Sustainable Tourism Strategy.

Executive Summary

The Paper details the key issues identified by Richard Denman during the recent mid-term review of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy, and provides a summary of work planned to address these issues prior to re-application for the *European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas*.

KEY ISSUES FROM THE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM STRATEGY MID-TERM REVIEW - FOR INFORMATION

Background

1. In summer 2008, the CNPA commissioned Richard Denman of The Tourism Company to undertake an informal interim review of the Strategy and Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism. This formed the basis of Paper 3 at the Board Meeting on 31st October. As a follow-up to that paper the Board requested a summary of work ongoing to address the priority issues raised during the review. This is detailed below.

Key Issues

2. **Clarify the relationship between the different action programmes under the Park Plan as they relate to each other and to the sustainable tourism strategy and action plan. In principle, seek to work to one strategy and action plan for sustainable tourism that is clearly recognised by all stakeholders.**
3. The sustainable tourism strategy and action plan is fully reflected within the Park Plan with the specific actions all sitting within the Priority for Action Programmes. In some cases the actions were applicable to other business sectors beyond tourism and so their wording has been amended accordingly. It is therefore straightforward to pull this information together under a 'sustainable tourism' banner, as and when required. The exercise to update and submit the sustainable tourism strategy and action plan to Europarc for reaccreditation will be a good opportunity to renew stakeholder ownership and commitment to delivery.
4. **Review and clarify the coverage and functions of the different Advisory Forums and Delivery Teams as they relate to tourism. Review make up of the teams and ensure commitment of participants. Encourage participants to relate to the constituents they represent. Ensure regular meetings.**
5. A level of concern has been noted over whether current Advisory Forum and Delivery Team structures are as efficient and effective as they might be. For example, the private sector feel that there is scope to rationalise the Delivery Teams so that tourism issues are primarily addressed through one Team rather than two. However there are broader issues to consider beyond those relating to tourism and so Management Team plan to initiate a review of Park Plan delivery structures in the near future. The reference to regular meetings relates

to the Tourism & Business Delivery Team having not met for some time prior to Richard Denman's visit. There were specific reasons for this including a meeting cancellation due to snow and there being no programme manager in place after Chris Taylor's secondment ended. With the recruitment of Chris Bremner as Sustainable Economy Manager, Delivery Team meetings are back on track.

6. **Help the private sector to decide what structures will best encourage their engagement with the Cairngorms National Park. In this, the merits of private sector bodies coming together to form one body (organisation or network) for the Cairngorms as a whole should be set out.**
7. This work was already in train at the time of Richard Denman's visit and is the subject of a separate Board paper on a proposed model for business collaboration across the Park.
8. **Help private sector enterprises to obtain maximum benefit from environmental management, certification and branding. Promote branded enterprise and products as actively as possible.**
9. From Spring 2009 branded businesses will receive a 'brand pack' containing material to help promote their business and the brand values, including for example towel agreement cards and window stickers. Branded businesses will also be promoted on the new CNP web portal as well as the existing promotion on the CNPA website. CNPA will continue to work with partners such as visitscotland.com to encourage better promotion of the Green Tourism Business Scheme, and sustainable tourism generally.
10. **Strengthen support from enterprises and visitors for conservation of the special qualities of the park.**
11. Visitor payback initiatives can be in the form of monetary donations, or visitor time e.g. through volunteering schemes. A scoping study to assess potential options for delivery of a visitor payback scheme in the Cairngorms will be carried out in early 2009 and will be jointly funded by CNPA and ACDM Ltd. This will seek to review existing local and national visitor payback schemes as well as looking at best practice examples from elsewhere.
12. **Seek to gain maximum exposure from VisitScotland for the Cairngorms as a national park of international standing and as a flagship of sustainable tourism.**
13. Work remains ongoing, particularly as regards visitscotland.com, which has recently been brought back into public ownership. Work is largely

being led by the private sector and recent changes to visitscotland.com include a range of local itineraries for visitors to download, and better links to local websites.

14. **Launch and actively promote the Cairngorms web portal and ensure that it puts across strong messages about the Park and how it can be enjoyed sustainably.**
15. The web portal is largely complete and will be launched after agreement has been reached about links to the private sector. The site contains advice to visitors on sustainable behaviour.
16. **Work with private sector bodies on a coordinated marketing plan for the Cairngorms.**
17. It should be remembered that a Marketing Strategy was prepared in 2004 and was subsequently integrated into the sustainable tourism strategy and action plan. Many of the activities that have been progressed under the Awareness and Understanding priority for action contribute to positive marketing of the Park. However, further marketing work would be helpful, particularly in developing a framework that is coherent and consistent at a Park wide level but which also recognises the different characteristics and attributes of the different parts of the Park. As per the Board paper on a proposed model for business collaboration across the Park, it is appropriate that the private sector take a lead in developing the marketing plan with the CNPA and other partners playing a supporting role.
18. **Strengthen the ability of private sector tourism businesses to deliver information about the Cairngorms to their guests, including the use of the interpretation guide.**
19. Interpretation guidance has now been published, and formed part of the Cairngorms Tourism Conference 2008. A series of workshops to introduce the guidance to businesses are planned in early 2009. CNPA is involved in a Scottish Enterprise pilot project on tourism staff induction training in Deeside. Work on the Cairngorms Connections course will feed into the development of this training.
20. **Undertake further work on activities and products which put across the local distinctiveness of the Cairngorms. Place more emphasis on bringing out the historical and cultural heritage. Review the role, delivery and promotion of events. Make more of local produce.**
21. Cultural heritage projects and events are largely supported through LEADER. A cultural heritage officer, supported by LEADER, will be employed from April 2009. Events listings will be included on the new

web portal, linked to Hi-Arts. Action to support and promote the local Food and Drink sector is now forms part of the work programme for the Sustainable Economy Manager.

22. **Clarify the links between the Outdoor Access Strategy and tourism, especially with respect to information and marketing.**
23. Information on countryside events, ranger services and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code will feature on the Cairngorms web portal. Scotland's access legislation is a marketing strength for the destination and it is anticipated that this will feature in the co-ordinated marketing plan (8).
24. **Improve coordination of business support and training.**
25. On top of the various training actions we have delivered or supported, we secured agreement that courses funded via SE or HIE could be attended by businesses from across the whole Park. SE are also piloting a Planning to Succeed training project for tourism businesses that will be open to businesses from across the whole Park. The Cairngorms LAG are to explore the potential for a bespoke business support programme within the Park.
26. **Make the most of the innovative work on public transport, through maximising awareness and promotion.**
27. Support for the Heather Hopper and Cairngorms Explorer has been budgeted for 2009/10. Longer term commitment for both projects would assist promotion, which ideally would be planned further ahead for maximum effect.
28. **Encourage community-level engagement and networking between local business.**
29. Community Action Planning is now being rolled out across the Park. Different communities are taking different approaches, but tourism and business associations will be fully engaged in the work.
30. Destination Management Organisations work with their respective community-level tourism and business associations.
31. **Work with the indicators and monitoring proposed for the Park Plan, with minor additions as may be appropriate. Give high priority to the upcoming visitor survey and enterprise feedback.**
32. The Visitor Survey is planned for 2009/10 and is the subject of a separate paper. A repeat Business Enterprise Survey is also planned for

2009/10 to feed into development of the revised Sustainable Tourism Strategy.

33. **Give careful consideration to the future timing of renewal of the sustainable tourism strategy and action plan, the reapplication for the Charter, and how this relates to the Park Plan.**
34. As agreed at the board meeting on 31st October, the next Sustainable Tourism Strategy will be developed in 2010 for submission to Europarc in reapplication for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism In Protected Areas in early 2011. The Strategy will be developed in association with the draft Park Plan and clear links will be maintained between the two documents.

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