

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: CAIRNGORMS TOURISM PARTNERSHIP AND ACTION PLAN

**Prepared by: Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning & Rural Development
Sandra Middleton, Head of Rural Development**

Purpose

To provide an update on the revised approach to tourism delivery, as agreed by the CNPA Board in September 2014. The paper includes an update on the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership and progress with delivering the Cairngorms Tourism Action Plan.

Cairngorms Tourism Partnership

1. In September 2014 the CNPA Board approved the formation of the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership (CTP) to replace the Sustainable Tourism Forum. The Cairngorms Tourism Partnership meets twice a year. One meeting focusses on marketing and related activity the other on destination development issues. The CTP has now met on two occasions with a further meeting planned for November 2015. The first meeting of the CTP included a marketing workshop whilst the second focussed on transport (specifically the opportunities provided by the A9 dualling project) and on training. The meetings have been well-attended and well-received by partners providing a forum for public sector representatives and businesses to consider key issues and advise on way forwards. The November meeting will be an opportunity to further develop a collaborative marketing strategy for the CNP.

Cairngorms Tourism Action Plan

2. Implementation of the Cairngorms Tourism Action Plan forms the focus of the work of the CTP. The Action Plan has been written to align the actions arising from the Cairngorms Sustainable Tourism Strategy with the National Tourism Strategy (Tourism Scotland 2020) and the Cairngorms Economic Strategy.
3. A summary of progress in delivering the Cairngorms Tourism Action Plan, both by CNPA and partners, can be viewed in **Annex I**. Further updates on issues of significance are provided below.

Europarc Charter

4. The Cairngorms National Park was awarded the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas in 2005 and then in 2011 on the basis of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy (STS). Looking forward, we have indicated to Europarc that our preference would be to use the next National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) as the basis of any future application for the Charter, rather than submitting a stand-alone Sustainable Tourism Strategy. We anticipate that this approach will provide a more integrated method for addressing the complex sustainable tourism issues that we face in the Cairngorms. We have received positive feedback about this approach and on that basis we would plan to apply for the Charter early in 2017.
5. Europarc have also indicated that the work we are doing in the Cairngorms on developing strategic collaborations to address sustainable tourism issues at a regional scale is of considerable interest other countries and they have encouraged us to promote our work more widely and to actively engage with network members.

Visitor Survey

6. The National Park Visitor Survey that is undertaken once every five years is now almost complete and results will be available in October. We intend to develop a summary of the findings that will be circulated directly to businesses and other stakeholders and promote the results in the press, supported by social media activity. The implications will be discussed with the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership in November. Highlights of the interim results will be presented at the CNPA Board meeting.

Aberdeen City and Shire Tourism Review

7. Members are already aware of the work that has been undertaken in Aberdeenshire to review tourism arrangements. The proposal is to form one Tourist Organisation to replace three existing destination organisations in the area and the Area Tourism Partnership, all to take effect from March 2016. In principle we consider that the proposals will be of benefit to the National Park. There will be better opportunities for strategic alignment behind the respective destinations and greater clarity about marketing offerings and destination development activity. The finer details of the proposals are still being developed and staff are keeping closely in touch with key officers and attending a marketing workshop on 17 September and an industry engagement event in Deeside on 29 September. Staff from Cairngorms Business Partnership, the destination organisation for the National Park are also attending.

Murray Ferguson

Sandra Middleton

murrayferguson@cairngorms.co.uk

sandramiddleton@cairngorms.co.uk

September 2015