
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: PLANNING SERVICE PRIORITIES 2019/20

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Purpose of Report

To review progress over the last year and to ask the Planning Committee to consider and approve the proposed planning service priorities for 2019/20.

Summary

The Planning Committee considers a set of planning service priorities to be delivered each year as part of our pro-active approach to performance improvement. During 2018/19 the planning service completed three of the six priorities that had been identified for the year, partly because some critical staff shortages and other significant work. For the year ahead, 6 service priorities are proposed in addition to the core service delivery targets including the analysis of responses to the LDP consultation and subsequent LDP examination. Once approved, these will be included in individual staff work programmes for 2019/20.

Recommendation

That the Planning Committee consider and approve the proposed planning service priorities for 2019/20.

Background and Context

1. In April 2018, the Planning Committee approved planning service improvement priorities for 2018/19. These improvement priorities have informed the work of the planning service during 2018/19 and are an important part of the CNPA's annual Planning Performance Framework (PPF) report. The planning service is now in the process of identifying improvement priorities to steer work over the coming year. The proposed improvement priorities outlined in this report are intended to complement and enhance the core planning services that the CNPA delivers (development plan preparation and delivery, development management, monitoring and enforcement). They are not a substitute for that work, but are about doing it in better ways to deliver better outcomes for customers and the CNPA.

Review of Service Priorities from 2018/19

2. The six proposed service improvements agreed by the Planning Committee in April 2018 are shown in Table I below, along with a brief progress report on delivery.

Table I 2018/19 Planning Service Improvements	
1	<p>Simplify mechanisms for securing planning obligations and reduce need for planning agreements.</p> <p>Establishing simpler, cheaper and faster ways of securing necessary planning obligations</p> <p><i>Only limited progress made with this improvement as staff shortages meant resources were focused on core functions.</i></p>
2	<p>Develop and deliver a schools engagement / involvement programme</p> <p>As part of the CNPA's approach to involving young people during the year of young people.</p> <p><i>This priority was delayed as a result of the planning services' contribution to the CNPA hosting of the Europarc conference in 2018. The youngest member of the planning team was heavily involved in developing the Europarc Youth Manifesto over a period of weeks. The Europarc Conference also involved local schools.</i></p>
3	<p>Plan and deliver workshop on natural heritage with SNH, SEPA and Local Authorities</p> <p>Sharing good practice and ensuring consistent application of policy and practice across the National Park.</p> <p><i>Only limited progress made with this improvement as staff shortages meant resources were focused on core functions.</i></p>
4	<p>Increase participation and engagement in the consultation on the proposed Local Development Plan</p> <p>Using what we have learnt from recent consultations to increase informed comment on important issues.</p> <p><i>The CNPA promoted the proposed LDP consultation through drop-in sessions and a significant web and social media campaign. The drop-in sessions were an effective way of informing people of the LDP process and of providing accurate advice to those confused or who misunderstood the process or facts. The web and social media campaigns have significantly increased the light engagement with the process and provided people with easy-to-reach information on the process. Although it is not possible to quantify the benefits of this in terms of formal responses to the proposed LDP, it is contributing to better informed individuals and audiences.</i></p>

Table 1
2018/19 Planning Service Improvements

5	<p>Consolidate past improvements and procedures</p> <p>For the past two years, the planning team has set ambitious service improvement priorities. At a time when we have also recruited a number of new staff, embedding changes requires consistent work and effort. We think that there is more work to do to gain the full benefit of the past years' service priorities such as our Planning Committee training programme, approach to monitoring and enforcement activity, using our new customer feedback processes etc.</p> <p><i>This improvement is an essential part of the planning team's work. We continue to embed past procedures and look to enhance previous improvements.</i></p>
6	<p>Explore efficiencies in delivery of the CNPA's planning monitoring and enforcement role and outdoor access authority roles</p> <p>There are clear comparisons between some of the work of the planning team and outdoor access teams and this work will explore whether shared systems or procedures can create efficiencies in cost or time.</p> <p><i>The CNPA's Recreation and Access Manager has undertaken a review that has identified planning enforcement good practice that could be effectively transferred to outdoor access work management. The CNPA enforcement officer can also be used for initial outdoor access casework investigation.</i></p>

- The significant milestone for the planning service during 2018/19 was the development of and consultation on the proposed Local Development Plan, with use of videos and simulations and a major social media campaign. We will update the Planning Committee with a comprehensive report on PPF delivery and performance later in 2019.

Service Priorities for 2019/20

- The proposed planning service improvements for 2019/20 are shown in Table 2. These further improvements have been discussed within the staff team and also aim to respond to general feedback received from stakeholders, including through the Planning Representatives Network and the Developers Forum. The proposed priorities build upon the progress that has been made in previous years.

Table 2
Proposed 2019/20 Planning Service Improvements

1	<p>Simplify mechanisms for securing planning obligations and reduce need for planning agreements.</p> <p>Establishing simpler, cheaper and faster ways of securing necessary planning obligations</p>
2	<p>Develop and deliver a schools engagement / involvement programme.</p> <p>In addition to work with local secondary Schools, we will ask the emerging Cairngorms Youth Action Group to help co-design a programme with young people.</p>

Table 2 Proposed 2019/20 Planning Service Improvements	
3	<p>Plan and deliver workshop on natural heritage with SNH, SEPA and Local Authorities</p> <p>Sharing good practice and ensuring consistent application of policy and practice across the National Park to be held autumn 2019.</p>
4	<p>Undertake a monitoring scheme on holiday and second home ownership, changes of use from residential property and impacts on communities.</p> <p>The development of the LDP has increased awareness of the changes in use of residential property to short term holiday letting property. The data available through council tax and non-domestic rates records requires some ground trothing for accuracy and the CNPA will undertake some additional monitoring of newly completed housing developments. We will also publish a Planning Advice Note to explain the rules on use and changes of use.</p>
5	<p>Increase our monitoring of hill tracks development and awareness of policy amongst estates and land managers.</p> <p>Our monitoring and enforcement of unauthorised hill tracks has increased over the past three years. During 2019/20 we will complete a monitoring project using aerial photography and will provide further guidance for estates and land managers.</p>
6	<p>Consolidate past improvements and procedures</p> <p>Over the past few years, the planning team has set ambitious service improvement priorities. At a time when we have also recruited a number of new staff, embedding changes requires consistent work and effort.</p>

Next Steps

5. Once the service improvements are approved, staff will incorporate them into the Planning Service Unit Plan for the year and into individual's work plans. The Planning Committee will continue to receive regular updates on planning service performance.
6. The Planning Committee Training Programme for 2019/20 is being drawn together now. The training programme will include sessions on:
 - a) Trees, woodland and planning
 - b) Use of bonds/insurance guarantees
 - c) Affordable Housing delivery
 - d) Good design and placemaking
 - e) Planning System and Building Regulations
 - f) Field trips to developments completed or in progress
 - g) Planning Committee self-reflection session

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