
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING held at the Grant Arms Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey on Friday 26th October 2012 at 1.30pm

PRESENT

Peter Argyle	Eleanor Mackintosh
Duncan Bryden (Convener)	Willie McKenna
Angela Douglas	Fiona Murdoch
Katrina Farquhar	Martin Price
Jeanette Gaul	Gordon Riddler
Gregor Hutcheon	Gregor Rimell
John Latham	Brian Wood
Bill Lobban	

In Attendance:

Will Boyd-Wallis	Jane Hope
David Cameron	Sandra Middleton
Kate Christie	Gavin Miles
Pete Crane	Fran Potheary
Murray Ferguson	Claire Ross
Bob Grant	Hamish Trench
Alistair Hight	Francoise van Buuren

Apologies:

Dave Fallows	Kate Howie
David Green	Mary McCafferty

Welcome and Introduction

1. Duncan Bryden welcomed everyone to the meeting, his first in the Chair, noting that the focus of the day would be on delivery of the National Park Plan and the CNPA's own Corporate Plan.

Minutes of Last Meeting – approval

2. The minutes of the meeting on 31st August were approved.

Matters Arising

3. None.

Declarations of Interest

4. None

Report on Delivery (Papers 1 – 4)

5. Jane Hope set the scene for the consideration of papers 1-4, explaining that the new National Park Plan and the new Corporate Plan had provided the impetus to design a new approach to reporting to the Board on Delivery. The proposed new approach being presented consisted of four papers. Papers 2 and 3 presented information about the delivery of the two Plans against milestones and key performance indicators, along with some narrative about work in progress; Paper 4 set this in context, and Paper 1 distilled from all these three papers an assessment of what appeared to be the main issues for further discussion on which the Board could usefully give a steer. The aim of the new approach was to support the Board in fulfilling its role in overseeing the National Park Authority's performance, policies, and its use of resources. It provided an opportunity for the Board to consider whether there were issues that warranted further and deeper discussion at forthcoming Board meetings. It allowed the Board to take an overview of delivery of the National Park Plan and raise issues with Partners or Ministers if appropriate.
6. Members were asked to consider whether this new format for presenting twice yearly reports to the Board was useful. Finally in presenting this new approach, Jane Hope noted that it was important to not only assess progress with plans, but also to be able to do the much more difficult task of assessing the affect/impact of the organisations work. While there were four papers presented and the intention was that these should be considered as a whole, nevertheless for ease of discussion, it was suggested that Papers 2 and 3 would be taken in turn, followed by Paper 1 to allow an overarching strategic discussion.

Corporate Plan Monitoring (Paper 2)

7. Gavin Miles presented this paper on behalf of the Operational Management Group (the group of eight programme managers who took responsibility for operations). The paper, which would be provided twice a year, provided an update on delivery of the

Corporate Plan for 2012-15. Given that the Plan was only a few months into its life, there was relatively little significant change to report. The paper focused on setting out the format that would be used in the future to demonstrate change and keep the Board up to date with Corporate Plan delivery and the overall health of the organisation. The paper used a balanced score card framework that had indicators to reflect the full range of CNPA activity within financial management, governance, and risk management, human resources management and Corporate Plan delivery. There were 16 suggested indicators for Corporate Plan delivery as an efficient way of tracking the effects of the CNPA's activities. Members were asked to consider and agree the key performance indicators (KPIs) proposed, and to consider whether the format of the report was a good basis for reporting over the next three years.

8. In discussion the following points were made:
 - a) There was some discussion about the 16 KPIs. These related to the eight programmes in the Corporate Plan. Table 2 indicated that many of the indicators were relevant to the delivery of more than just one programme, and there was some concern that Table 2 suggested that some Corporate Plan programmes were over-represented in the KPIs. However, the point was made that there were essentially two KPIs for each programme; a degree of overlap did not detract from being able to assess delivery of each programme.
 - b) There was some discussion over indicator 11, and whether the number of members of the Cairngorms Business Partnership really represented the best measure. It was not a measure under the CNPA's control but it was indirectly a measure of the likelihood of achieving the outcome of a thriving economy. The aim was to do this by growing the strength of the CBP, and an indicator of success was the number of businesses involved in the CBP. There was an argument that a better measure would be the economic value of the membership but this was rather more difficult to assess.
 - c) In a more general discussion it was noted that a KPI at best could only be a proxy measure. Further it had to be a measure which could be assessed efficiently. It was important to avoid the tendency to pursue the measure and not the outcome.
 - d) In respect of outcome 6 relating to Cairngorms Nature, it was noted that activities and projects were already happening and therefore a baseline of zero may not be appropriate. Once again it was noted that the KPIs were an indicator only, and a measure of the direction of travel.
 - e) KPIs were there to show trends. A good example was the speed of dealing with planning applications. The totality of the planning service was much more than this, nevertheless the time taken to deal with planning applications would be an early warning sign on whether there was an issue to be investigated.
 - f) There was some discussion about whether there were adequate KPIs in respect of conservation. (Indicator 4 and 6) It was noted that there was a distinction to be drawn between the National Park Plan and the Corporate Plan. The CNPA efforts were very clearly directed in the Corporate Plan to making

certain mechanisms (e.g. Cairngorms Nature) work in order to achieve the bigger goals of effects on conservation status of land and species. These latter were therefore reflected in the KPIs of the National Park Plan. It was requested that staff consider further whether the special qualities of the Park could be factored into the indicators 4 and 6 for the CNPA Corporate Plan.

- g) The 16 KPIs were broadly agreed subject to comments made. It was noted that by retaining these 16 KPIs, it would be useful to see the trends in diagrammatic form over the coming months and years. Having agreed that it was nevertheless agreed also that if it was felt appropriate, new indicators could also be added.
- h) The point was made that there was a clear distinction between the KPIs in the Corporate Plan and the National Park Plan, even though there was obviously a relationship between the two. One set of KPIs was used to report on the Corporate Plan and a different set in the National Park Plan. It was important not to blur the distinction as the CNPA needed its own KPIs to show its contribution to the Scottish Government Outcomes.

9. The recommendations of the paper were agreed as follows:

- a) The Board agreed the Key Performance Indicators for the delivery of the CNPA Corporate Plan (subject to further consideration of indicators 4 and 6);**
- b) The Board agreed the format of the report for future reporting on Corporate Plan delivery on a six monthly basis.**

National Park Partnership Plan Monitoring (Paper 3)

10. Gavin Miles introduced the paper on behalf of the Operational Management Group, presenting the results of the latest six monthly analysis of progress in delivering the National Park Partnership Plan. As with the Corporate Plan, only a few months of the Plan's life had elapsed and there was relatively little significant change to report. The paper therefore focused on setting out the format that would be used in future to demonstrate change and maintain the Board and the National Park Partnerships strategic oversight of delivery. It was noted that future reports would be prepared with the help of the National Park Partnerships monitoring and coordination group which in future would be meeting twice yearly to assess progress with delivery.

11. The recommendations of the paper were agreed as follows:

- a) The Board noted the report on progress;**
- b) The Board agreed the format of the report for future use.**

October 2012 Context Setting (Paper 4)

12. This paper was intended as background information only and was therefore not discussed separately.

Half Yearly Review of Planned Delivery: Overview of Issues (Paper 1)

13. Jane Hope introduced the paper on behalf of Management Team and the Operational Management Group. The paper presented an overview of progress with delivery of both Plans as set out in papers 2 and 3 and considered some of the implications for future work. The issues for consideration fell under three main headings: those relating to the organisation itself and its use of resources; those relating to delivery of programmes in the Corporate Plan; and those issues relating to the delivery of the National Park Partnership Plan. Finally at the end of the paper, Paragraph 30 set out the issues on which it was felt papers would be brought back to the Board over the coming six months to deal with some of the issues arising as part of the half yearly review of delivery. The Board were invited to consider the issues raised by the paper between paragraphs 9 and 30.
14. In discussion the following points were made:
 - a) The CNPA's approach over 10 years had been to invest in the ability of others – businesses, communities and others – to deliver for the National Park thereby encouraging real collective ownership of the Park and its future. This was often termed an “enabling” approach. The approach brought many benefits and meant that more could be achieved with the CNPA's small budget than a more conventional approach. But there were consequences. One of these was that governance and risk management arrangements had to take account of this way of working in which the CNPA ceded a degree of control. A further paper on the legal and other implications of this approach was requested (and noted that it was in hand). As part of this whole issue it was noted that the use of the Cairngorms Brand and the CNPA logo were also relevant. The CNPA's approach had always been that it was the profile of the Park that mattered, not the profile of the CNPA. As part of this discussion it was noted that the CNPA should avoid the tendency to be apologetic about being “enabling” and the fact that it brought partners together, levering in effort and funding. It actually required considerable credit and there were many things that would not happen without the driving and coordinating influence of CNPA. It was in practice an excellent model of smaller government, avoiding duplication.
 - b) In respect of paragraphs 9-11, the Board was broadly content subject to a further paper being brought back to the Board as discussed.
 - c) The approach of KPIs to measuring delivery had been discussed under a previous paper and the Board were broadly content. At paragraphs 14 and 15, the issue was raised of the organisation's current policy for placing, in effect, a guideline on the split between overhead expenditure and Operational Plan expenditure of around 60%/40%. This had been a conscious choice over the previous ten years; it remained the operating principle but it was noted that as Grant-in-Aid reduced this may need to be considered over the next eighteen months.
 - d) Paragraph 16 and 17 considered the issue of capital expenditure. It was agreed that further discussion on capital expenditure was needed, in particular to

- develop a long-term strategy for significant capital expenditure in the National Park over a long period. It was also noted that as part of this it would be important to get other partners and communities to realise that if they could get projects ready they would be able to take advantage of capital monies when they became available. As part of this, it was important to get planning permission even in advance of knowing that money was available. It was also important to give communities and partners a clear brief as to what “shovel ready” meant.
- e) The Finance Committee had considered that very point, and agreed it would be useful for the Board to have a deeper discussion about long-term capital investment in the Park. This would need to link with Community Action Plans, and indeed any other Plans in existence, and needed to take account of the fact that some communities would be better placed to take on the management of big projects than others. Finally, it was also agreed that it was important to continually measure the economic value of investments made in the Park; recent studies particularly on recreation had shown that this could be considerable.
 - f) Paragraph 20 concerned the profile of the Cairngorms National Park and noted that there were two big opportunities coming up in 2013, namely The Year of Natural Scotland and the 10th Anniversary of the Cairngorms National Park’s foundation. A paper would be brought to the Board setting out plans and progress across Scotland as a whole. It was noted that some elements of the Plan had already been decided for us and the CNPA would play its part accordingly; other elements were for the CNPA to decide. Much of what the CNPA would be doing would be building on what was already in the annual plan but would simply be giving a different flavour to this.
 - g) There was some discussion about the notion of “celebrating” 10 years of the National Park. It was pointed out that the 10th Anniversary was merely a hook for conveying what had been done over a period of ten years; it certainly was not intended as a reason for promoting the CNPA.
 - h) In respect of paragraph 23 there was some concern expressed about the lack of progress with the Economic Forum. There were reasons for this and the CBP was also concerned. Nevertheless the item was still very much on the agenda and progress was being made.
 - i) In respect of paragraph 29 (LEADER) it was noted that plans were being put in place centrally to fund a transition period.
 - j) The list of potential Board papers for the coming six months set out at paragraph 30 was noted; this would be refined and a list of papers and dates would be circulated round the Board in due course.

Committee and Forum Membership (Paper 5)

15. The paper set out proposed Committee Forum Membership. The following vacancies were filled as follows:
- Finance Committee: Duncan Bryden, John Latham
 - Audit Committee: Jeanette Gaul

Staffing and Recruitment Committee: Willie McKenna
Sustainable Tourism Forum: Bill Lobban.

16. It was noted that Cairngorms Nature should now be added to the list of Committees and Forums and Martin Price was currently Chairing the Strategy Group which would steer the formation of the organisation. Will Boyd-Wallis noted that the report to the Board on Cairngorms Nature would be in February rather than December.

Gordon Riddler, Martin Price, Angela Douglas, Gregor Rimell left the meeting.

AOCB

17. The Convener noted that under AOCB the Board Members normally reported on their recent activities. This was useful, and he proposed to put some structure on this, by providing a template for Board Members to complete so that all were aware of what their colleagues were engaged in. The AOCB section of the Board meeting would then be used to pick up the most significant of these activities.

Date of Next Meeting:

18. Next formal meeting Friday 21st December, Grant Arms Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey.