

Cairngorms Nature Strategy Group Meeting Grantown on 27th March 2013

Present Will Boyd-Wallis (CNPA)
Giles Brockman (FCS)
Hebe Carus (RSPB) standing in for Pete Mayhew
Stephen Corcoran (CNPA)
Andy Ford (CNPA)
Debbie Green (SNH)
George MacDonald (SGA)
Nick Mardell (Community Development Officer)
Martin Price (chair)
Justin Prigmore (CNPA)
Shaila Rao (NTS)
Sue Scoggins (SNH)
Andy Wells (SLE) (by videoconference)
Ian Wilson (NFUS)

Apologies: Pete Mayhew (RSPB)

1. Minutes of last meeting

Content agreed and action points discharged.

2. Cairngorms Nature Action Plan

Final Approval:

Considerable alterations have been made to incorporate the consultation responses including modifications to text, consolidation, etc.

Presentation of how to tackle the “areas for prioritisation” had not been decided prior to the meeting and required Strategy Group approval of one of the suggestions:

Option 1: Immediate action required, ongoing, over the 5 year lifespan of plan

Option 2: Add timescale e.g. Yr1, Yr2, etc.

Option 3: Detailed delivery plan on a year by year basis as additional document.

This work is required to direct resources and clearly set out the actions that require an immediate start. This is an ongoing part of the delivery phase and it was decided it should be part of the next phase of work. Strategy Group agreement is therefore to leave until after the Action Plan has been launched. Priority now is to get the plan finalised, designed ready for publication and ensure the launch is a success.

SGA Involvement – It was suggested that there could be a stronger SGA commitment within the plan and it was asked if there was time to include at this late stage?

Mar 13 API: AF and GM to agree and incorporate SGA involvement.

SLE delivery - there was slight concern from SLE regarding the limited ability to drive forward some of the actions with members, but SLE are very happy to be an active partner wherever possible, particularly in the promotion of the principles of the plan.

It was discussed if the Moorland Forum should be involved. Agreement was that it was not directly relevant to involve a forum, which includes many Cairngorms Nature partners anyway, and better impact will be achieved by working directly through the partners.

There was some slight disagreement with wording e.g. NFUS in Grassland section - change suggested. Also Change NFE to FCS throughout document.

There is a need for an executive summary to be produced, to be available at the launch on 18 May.

Mar 13 AP2: CNAP Team to develop executive summary (see AP 9).

Mar 13 AP3: CNAP Team to incorporate additional minor text changes.

Group Agreement – **Plan approved** with these minor tweaks.

Options for managing delivery:

A number of options were discussed for managing and reporting delivery. It was agreed that there is a need for actions to be prioritised for delivery throughout the five years of the plan, including identification of those that are ongoing. Monitoring will be done using a traffic light system and reported back to the Strategy Group as a standing agenda item.

Working Groups – a number of suggestions were discussed including setting up formal working groups as per chapters and having a more flexible approach that worked with existing networks. There were mixed opinions on the merits of both approaches. A Working Group approach should be able to avoid just capturing data on what's happening already. There is a need to ensure that new things happen as a result of this partnership

It was agreed to trial, and review after one year, bringing together areas of activity in whatever way was most appropriate and effective, depending on the circumstances and what is already happening. There was slight concern this will involve a great deal of monitoring for CNPA which could be beyond the capacity of the team.

There was discussion over what CNPA's role is. Are CNPA able to capture all of this info? Who is going to develop each of the individual partner delivery plans? How do we put in place a method to identify how we are progressing against targets? Key partners may report on broad indicators but not have the resource to report on the detail of actions.

CNPA's role is therefore to co-ordinate what info is supplied by partners and to have close relationships with key partners. There was general agreement that CNPA needs

to take a proactive role with gathering data and reporting progress towards targets to the Strategy Group.

The Cairngorms Nature Team are to put together a work plan for year one of delivery, broken down across areas and across partners i.e. themed.

Mar 13 AP4: CNAP Team to develop prioritisation of actions and related work plans and circulate to SG for discussion at the next meeting.

3. Developing the Partnership – what does being a partner mean?

Discussion was had about the differing roles of potential partners.

One option was to split between active “delivery partners” and “friends of”? There is a need to identify what the benefit is to people for being part of CN? What does it do for you?

We can't have a wide partnership for nature only if using the “friends” term. It should then be “friends of CNP” which is a broader concept, which would be too wide a remit for Cairngorms Nature. It was agreed not to use the “friend” term, but there is still a need for differentiation between delivery partners and those who are supporting but not necessarily working on specific activities. A Partner should be someone with an interest, but further thought is needed in this area.

What should we be offering to partners in terms of benefits from being as part CN? An important role is to make it easy for people to find info, etc and funding opportunities. Communication is key and we need to communicate the overall end point and why CN exists. It is seen as essential to keeping the collaboration going. Communication of this work helps build a wider, more robust network even outwith CNP. The Partnership is also a good opportunity to know your neighbours for collaboration on projects or SRDP applications. It is important that partners sell the conservation message so that it gets higher up the agenda.

Website – holding page in place now.

- To be a one-stop shop for info and how to get involved
- Shop window for up-to-date information and what's happening
- Different parts of the website for different types of partners (e.g., farmers, upland managers, teachers) so they can find the actions and other information most relevant to them
- Social media to follow

The Volunteering part will be happening in the future years which will create desire to get involved further. This may create a significant demand and distract from delivery. Some phasing should be put in place for when a drive is put on for recruiting volunteers.

There is an opportunity for joint meetings with other forums e.g. Sustainable Tourism Forum, LOAF

Mar 13 AP5: CNAP Team to map out the phasing of volunteer drive and how this will be managed.

Newsletter – is there time/resources to produce something to communicate the good work that is out there? Need partners to feed in info, so that we can co-ordinate and push out. CN should co-ordinate the big picture e.g. Black grouse groups, mink initiative.

Mar 13 AP6: Develop communications channels: website, newsletter, social media

4. Launching the Partnership

Plans are well underway with developments for the launch event in Aviemore on 18th May.

It was requested that stories be told about successes, which could link to the opening by Richard Lochhead, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Environment. Look for other opportunities with MSP's who are Species Champions.

Mar 13 AP7: CNAP Team to develop opportunities for additional brief talks, etc at launch.

There needs to be method of welcoming new partners – contacts database at launch. Is there a way of capturing why someone wants to be a partner and what they can contribute e.g. a quick survey to assess interest - woodlands, volunteering, etc.

Mar 13 AP8: CNAP Team to develop simple survey for visitors to event to assess area of interest.

At launch we need a short (max two-page) summary to give away rather than a complete document. This links to the earlier suggestion of a need for an executive summary.

Mar 13 AP9: CNAP Team to develop summary hand-out document for event.

Postcards and other promotional material need to be produced with web address, etc. Badges with logo to be supplied to Strategy Group members attending event plus structure/layout of event.

Mar 13 AP10: CNAP Team to develop promotional material for event.

Mar 13 AP11: CNAP Team to ensure SG members have relevant details of event in advance and badges at event.

5. Ecosystem Services Research – CEH Proposal

MP gave a brief update on applying ecosystems approach that is being considered by CEH, and noted that this will be discussed during a meeting on research in the CNP on

22 May, which will lead to a wider meeting later in 2013. General support was given by the SG for being kept informed and involved.

6. Next Steps

- Timetable – on schedule.
- CNPA Board on 12th April
- Design of Action Plan – under development with Morton Ward. Images being sourced from contract with 2020 Vision.
- Launch – 18th May, Aviemore Highland Resort

The big push now is on promotion and getting Cairngorms Nature out there.

The chair would like to acknowledge the work done by the CNAP Team to deal with all the work and changes that have been necessary.

Appointment of Vice Convener –Andy Wells volunteered to take on this role, and all supported this.

7. AOCB – Human Dimensions Project

A human dimensions project would look to bring together the range of interested people with potentially opposing views on a topic of conservation and land management concern to work through the barriers that are preventing progress. Potential areas for conflict resolution that have been identified within the CNP Partnership Plan are:

- Deer Management
- Raptor persecution
- Species re-introductions

It was thought that Raptor persecution could be the most likely candidate due to the work on-going or under development in the other areas. An academic from Canada has been involved in the early discussions about a potential project with CNPA, with the aim of providing an impartial service. Concerns were expressed about flying in skills that are available within the UK and there was a recommendation to look at alternatives closer to home, both for economic reasons and to strengthen capacity in the UK.

There was general agreement that this is an area of high interest that the SG would like more details on.

Mar 13 API2: Further details to be developed by CNPA for discussion at future CNAP meeting.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Late June – location Lecht or The Crown Estate Office, Tomintoul.