
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: CEO REPORT

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Purpose

- I. To highlight to Board members the main strategic areas of work that are being directed by Management Team. These are areas where significant staff resources are being directed to deliver with partners the aspirations of the National Park Partnership Plan.

Strategic Context

Conservation:

- a) **HLF Tomintoul / Glenlivet** – The stage 1 bid for HLF Funding for the Tomintoul / Glenlivet Landscape Partnership has been submitted with the CNPA as lead partner in this first phase. The total bid to HLF for project development (one year) and project delivery (four years) is for £2.5m out of a total projected cost of £3.6m. See Board paper for update.
- b) **SRDP** – The CNPA has been involved in developing the targeting work for the agri-environment part of the SRDP. This included hosting a workshop in Grantown to trial different approaches to mapping priority areas.
- c) **River Spey catchment** – The issues around the River Spey have received significant attention in this period with Landward and Out of Doors both undertaking features on water abstraction issues. Senior staff from SEPA, SNH and the CNPA are meeting regularly on these issues.
- d) **A9** - The NPA is involved at an officer level in a number of different temporary traffic orders to ensure minimum disruption during the busy summer season. Negotiations continue with Transport Scotland on the strategic design of many aspects of the future A9 dualling within the NP.
- e) **Wildlife Crime** – The CNPA has written to the Minister for Environment on the issue of wildlife crime and specifically raptor persecution in the National Park and is working with partners on a meeting in the east of the Park probably in August. It will also be a topic of discussion at the forthcoming Cairngorms Nature Strategy Group and meeting with landowners later in the year.
- f) **HLF Wildcat** – A Scottish wide HLF bid has been delayed until August for work to support wildcat conservation. Three of the six areas proposed as priorities are within the Cairngorms National Park.

Visitor Experience:

- a) **HLF Mountain Paths** – The COAT led bid for funding for mountain paths has been submitted to HLF. This bid is for a project totalling £6.2m covering both National Parks.

- b) **Glenmore and Cairngorm Mountain** – The NPA has been working with partners on the development of a masterplan for Glenmore/Cairngorm Mountain within a wider partnership agreement. See Board paper for update.
- c) **Speyside Way** – Work has started on the Aviemore to Kinraig section of the Speyside across Kinrara Estate. Funding of £115,000 has been offered from Sustrans Community Links to construct additional links to Aviemore and Kinraig. An application to Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund is being made to match this support.
- d) **Deeside Way** – A feasibility study setting out the potential routes and costs has been completed to look at the extension of the route between Ballater and Braemar. The CNPA are now looking at what the potential next steps and timeline might be.

Rural Development:

- a) **Development Management** – The average time for planning applications within the Park continues to decrease and a number of large scale cases are going to committee or are likely to come into the planning system over the next 3 to 6 months.
- b) **An Camas Mòr** – A significant amount of senior staff time has been spent working on the detail of the planning application. The masterplan was called-in by the CNPA on 2 June date and the Recreation Management Plan is in development for submission in July. There is significant resource commitments associated with this with a view to bringing applications to the Planning Committee in September.
- c) **Local Development Plan** – The Reporters Unit held a hearing into housing supply issues on 3 June. It is still expected that the final report and recommendations from the Reporters will be issued in September 2014.
- d) **Local Plan Court Case** – The CNPA still awaits the Courts final deliberations on a Protected Expenses Order. There has been no formal feedback from the UK Supreme Court since January 2014.
- e) **Economic Development & Diversification Strategy** – The CNPA team have been working to develop the finalised Strategy on behalf of the Economic Forum. See Board paper for update.
- f) **Tourism and State Aid** – The CNPA have been developing our approach to tourism in the National Park and will be taking a paper to the Board with a proposal in September

Stakeholder Engagement:

- a) Joint Management Team meetings have been held with LLTTNPA, LDNP, SEPA and SportScotland.
- b) A joint board meeting was held between CNPA and HIE to discuss closer joint working on key priorities on 15 May.
- c) Meetings at a senior level have also been held with organisations, such as, Angus Council, RSPB, SNH, Natural Retreats, Uniqueness, NPPP Strategic Delivery Group and many others.
- d) The CEO spoke at the Scottish Land & Estates Annual Conference, highlighting the results of the CNP Landowners survey, the Natural Capital Debate at the Royal Highland Show and the Highland Council Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee.
- e) The UK ANPA meeting was held on 11 June to discuss the opportunities around commercial sponsorship.

- f) A number of meetings with Scottish Government have taken place on a range of topics including a specific meeting on housing in the National Park.

Communications:

- a) **Cairngorms Nature Festival** – The festival was a good success with events taking place across the National Park. Around 170 came to Boat of Garten Village Hall to hear a lively talk and debate from George Monbiot
- b) **John Muir Conference** – A great success with over 200 delegates discussing National Parks. The conference attracted lots of media and sparked a debate around new National parks in Scotland.
- c) **Digital Communications Review** – The revamping of the Park Authorities website is being planned including the development of visitor information to take account of state aid outcomes.
- d) **Merchandising and Sponsorship** – The CNPA have worked with the Brand Development Group and Blue Chip Marketing and will be testing a merchandise range this summer. The CNPA is also discussing several sponsorship opportunities with the private sector.
- e) **Landowner Survey** – The final report on the Landowner Survey has been received by the CNPA and released on the website. It will provide information for the development of appropriate policy responses within the National Park.

Organisational Development:

- a) **Organisational Development Strategy** – The implementation of the Organisational Development Strategy has started. All 6 Project Teams (comprising 30 staff) have met which has led to the development of an overarching action plan, covering a number of actions to be delivered over the next 12 months. This was initially fed back to staff at the staff awayday in early June
- b) **Staffing** – Following the restructure the CNPA are now up to full compliment.
- c) **Accommodation** – Proposals for the development of a hub office in Ballater are being developed with partners. The business case for accommodation changes is being developed for Scottish Government.
- d) **Pay award** – The two year pay remit was approved by Scottish Government, and following consultation with staff, the year one award was implemented in June pay.

Upcoming Issues of Note:

- a) **Scottish Rural Parliament** – First rural parliament scheduled for November 2014 in Oban. The CNPA are on the Advisory Forum representing both NPA's.
- b) **CAP Reform** – Ministerial announcement was made on 11 June on the future funding packages and the CNPA will need to consider potential impacts on the National Park
- c) **Hospital Services in Badenoch and Strathspey** – Consultation on the proposed changes to hospital services is ongoing, closing on 21 July.

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