

## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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### FOR DECISION

**Title: PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13**

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### **Purpose of Report**

To present the Planning Performance Framework Annual Report for 2012/13.

### **Summary**

This paper introduces the second annual report to be submitted to Scottish Government in line with the Planning Performance Framework (PPF) which was launched by Heads of Planning Scotland (HoPS) in 2012. The PPF is a comprehensive performance management tool to assist Scottish Government in assessing planning performance across planning authorities.

### **Recommendation**

That the Board:

- a) **Approve** the annual report (at **Annex 2**) for publication and submission to Scottish Government.

## PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13 – FOR DECISION

### Background

1. The Planning Committee approved the first PPF report for the Cairngorms National Park Authority (for the year 2011-12) on 12 October 2012. The Cairngorms National Park Authority received feedback from the Scottish Government on that report on 1 June 2013.
2. The PPF reports are made by all planning authorities as part of the Performance Management Framework developed by Heads of Planning Scotland (HoPS) to set out what a “high quality planning service” should look like and how it will be assessed. As members know, we take a proactive approach to improving our service to customers and have implemented Service Improvement Plans over the past four years. Last year’s PPF report informed the development of the CNPA’s most recent Planning Service Improvement Plan.

### Scottish Government Feedback on the 2011-12 PPF

3. The Scottish Government’s feedback on the 2011-12 PPF (**Annex 1**) report was constructive and generally positive, concluding:
  - a) *“Overall, a well structured report describing a customer-focused culture and a move towards the behaviours central to planning reform.*
  - b) *The report contains a lot of positive evidence, while not much that is self critical to point to the future improvement needs.*
  - c) *The report would benefit from some specific examples of actions taken and outcomes/feedback which demonstrate how you have displayed the culture and behaviours envisaged through the PPF.*
  - d) *A particular priority going forward ought to be on working with stakeholders to bring down decision-making timescales, particularly for major developments.”*
4. The Minister for Local Government and Planning, Derek Mackay MSP, wrote to Heads of Planning on 21 August 2013 with additional guidance on preparing the PPF reports. This guidance includes a series of planning performance markers developed by HoPS and COSLA with Scottish Government which the PPF reports should clearly refer to and these have been referenced in our report.

### The CNPA Planning Performance Framework report for 2012-13

5. The report (**Annex 2**) follows the format prescribed by Scottish Government. It demonstrates a generally positive picture of our planning service but identifies a few critical areas where further improvement is required. In the areas of Development Planning and Enforcement we continue to be able to demonstrate the standards expected of a high quality planning service and have several examples of good practice to demonstrate. Our Development Management service has also significantly improved (for

example, decision making timescales for local non-householder developments reduced from 29.5 weeks in 2011/12 to 18.5 weeks in 2013/14 while our approval rate for applications has risen from 80% to 94.1%). However, as the Report demonstrates we have further work to do on a number of issues including reducing timescales, improving pre-application discussions and increasing our use of project management and processing agreements.

6. We have used the report to highlight particular initiatives that demonstrate the success of our approach to planning including the first Sustainable Design Awards competition, the constructive work with the Developers Forum and Community Planning Representatives Network and the positive feedback - both from our customer satisfaction survey and Cairngorms Business Partnership's Business Barometer.
7. Members will be aware that we are currently are implementing a series of changes that will improve the planning service. We restructured the organisation with effect from early August so that the planning function is now the responsibility of one Director. We have appointed a new Head of Planning and a new Development Management Manager, both of whom are due to start work shortly, based in our Grantown office which is close to the majority of the planning applications and development within the Park. In addition we will now have increased staff resource that can take more focused approach to the management of major projects and to process improvements generally. We have identified in the report (in Section 4) the priority areas where we will want to see demonstrable progress as a result of these changes within the next six months.

### Looking to the Future

8. We will wish to develop a Service Improvement Plan for 2014/15 as part of our Corporate Plan in order to take all this work forwards. Due to the impending arrival of new senior staff and a number of other changes that are ongoing at present. We propose to work on this in late 2013 and bring a paper back to the Committee early in 2014.

### Recommendation

9. That the Board
  - a) **Approve** the annual report for 2012/13 for publication and submission to Scottish Government.

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