

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: PARK FOR ALL UPDATE: CNPA DISABILITY
EQUALITY SCHEME THREE YEAR REVIEW

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Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to review the CNPA Disability Equality Scheme (DES), a statutory requirement of the organisation that needs to be completed on a three year cycle. This paper looks back over the past three years to what the CNPA has achieved against the aims set by the Scottish Government in regards to disability and looks forward at the proposed work that will build on these achievements.

Recommendation

That the Board:

- a) Acknowledge the progress made on implementing the DES action plan in the past three years.
- b) Agree with the additional actions being proposed in the DES (2009-12) that build on the previous action plan.
- c) Note the requirement for three year reviews of CNPA's Gender Equality Scheme and Race Equality Scheme in June 2010 and be aware of the Single Equality Duty coming into force in 2011 covering all six equality strands.

Executive Summary

The CNPA has a statutory obligation to review its DES (first published Dec 2006) every three years. CNPA officers have reviewed the DES in collaboration with the Inclusive Cairngorms, the CNPA's equalities advisory forum. This includes acknowledging the actions that have been completed, highlighting the actions that need to be on-going and embedded into the CNPA's day to day operations and identified gaps where the CNPA need to build on what has been achieved in the past three years.

PARK FOR ALL UPDATE: CNPA DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME THREE YEAR REVIEW – FOR DECISION

Background

1. The CNPA is committed to developing a National Park which is inclusive by providing opportunities for everyone to access and enjoy it, whatever their background, age or ability. This is reflected in the National Park Plan's guiding principles of Social Justice, People Participating in the Park and Managing Change, with a particular focus on young people, people with disabilities, and people on low incomes.
2. As a public authority, CNPA has a legal duty to prepare and publish Equality Schemes for disability (as well as gender and race). This sets out how CNPA will promote disability equality in the delivery of its public functions and as an employer. The CNPA published its first Disability Equality Scheme (DES) in December 06, which was approved by the Board in April 2007.
3. We are required to publish and report annually to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) on progress of our DES, and review it after three years. Our new DES must be published by 4 December 2009. To prepare for this, CNPA staff have worked with Inclusive Cairngorms to review our current DES, identifying achievements, gaps and future opportunities to promote disability equality in the CNPA. A draft DES and Action Plan is provided at Annex 1, from which the key highlights are summarised in this paper.
4. Board members are asked to acknowledge what has been achieved to date, and agree to the proposed new actions in the DES 2009-12.

Progress on DES (2006-09)

Gathering and using evidence

5. A Development Workshop was held with Inclusive Cairngorms (IC) in Jan 09 to identify key policy areas of interest to IC related to the CNPA's Corporate Plan, which would help staff know when to engage with IC for advice. The key areas identified included outdoor access, visitor services and information, communities, housing and planning and Equality Schemes. This exercise has also helped to inform the priorities for the new DES.
6. The joint National Parks Outreach research project has provided useful information on the barriers for people with disabilities engaging with the National Parks and National Nature Reserves. Recommendations on ways to address these barriers are contained in the proposals for the new DES.
7. With regard to CNPA staff and Board, there is a gap in information on equality needs, which if known, may help to make their work environment more comfortable and safer.

8. Access audits have been undertaken in the CNPA offices in Grantown and Ballater and recommendations implemented, egg disabled parking signage, lower reception desk, portable hearing loop.

Consultation and Involvement

9. CNPA have worked closely with Inclusive Cairngorms to take forward our DES and other equalities schemes. This advisory forum has become much more active and effectively used by CNPA staff as a means of advising on and embedding equality and inclusion into our work. They have been consulted on the development of guidance for path signage, leaflets, Cairngorms Explorer, all abilities paths surfacing and community engagement. Their input will continue to be valued as Equality Impact Assessment is rolled out in CNPA.
10. The LOAF which advises on outdoor access in the National Park was originally set up with a place for a member representing disabilities. However there is currently no member with this specific interest.
11. Internally, staff have the opportunity to raise equalities issues through the Staff Consultative Forum, where equalities is a standing item on meeting agendas.

Implementing Equality Impact Assessment

12. 14 staff trained in EqlA and priority areas for EqlA have been identified by Inclusive Cairngorms and further staff workshops. Only two EqlA's completed, but several others have been informally assessed.

Action Planning and Delivery

13. Staff and Board training in disability awareness in 2007/08 by Capability Scotland attended by 50 staff and 3 Board members.
14. Public meetings are held in buildings which are accessible unless absolutely unavoidable. Hearing loop or other requirements are provided on request. Video conference facilities are now in place in Grantown and Ballater offices. Guidance on holding accessible meetings has been produced and promoted to staff.
15. Jobs are advertised in the local press and on the website, and are accessible to all. Anyone who requires an application in an alternative format will be provided with one. CNPA is recognised as an equal opportunities employer, obtaining the Positive about Disability 'Two Ticks' symbol.
16. CNPA have adopted a new 'accessible' corporate typeface 'Gill Sans', approved by the Scottish Accessible Information Forum. All corporate leaflets conform to DDA guidelines and are available in large print and audio tape on request.
17. Equalities training was offered to land managers, tourism and outdoor recreation providers to help improve their service to a broader client group. Although widely promoted, this training was poorly attended.
18. CNPA is working with partners to develop a range of outdoor access and recreational opportunities in the National Park for all abilities. This includes the

development of Core Paths which will be as inclusive and barrier-free as possible, and expanding health walks across the Park.

Recommendation

19. **That the Board acknowledge the progress made on implementing the DES action plan in the past three years.**

Proposals for Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan (2009-12)

20. Reviewing our DES provides an opportunity to refocus our priorities to ensure we are tackling the most relevant and significant issues to bring about disability equality. In doing this, we must consider what we have achieved to date and focus where more work is required, while also considering any evidence and the views of disabled people. Importantly, the new DES should also reflect CNPA's business, i.e. the Corporate Plan.
21. Several actions from the first DES continue into the new DES so as to continue good practice. This Board paper however, focuses on the additional actions which build on the first DES. The full list of actions are detailed in the DES Action Plan (at Annex 1)

Outreach

22. The findings from the Joint National Parks/Scottish Natural Heritage Outreach project (2009) identified ways to address the barriers to engagement for groups including people with disabilities. The recommendations are broadly categorised under 4 main headings:
- a) Building relationships and developing networks
 - b) Raising Awareness and understanding
 - c) Building commitment, confidence and competence
 - d) Practical support.

It should be noted that the report acknowledged that the CNPA had already made significant progress against all of these headings. In particular its work through the John Muir Award and Inclusive Cairngorms.

23. The specific actions to take forward as they relate to people with disabilities include:
- a) Developing more effective relationships with groups that represent people with disabilities. Develop a range of support packages that help disabled groups to engage with the Park. (e.g. Cairngorms on a Shoestring).
 - b) Provide advice and signposting for disability groups who wish to engage with the Park.
 - c) Review how development programmes e.g. John Muir Award and Duke of Edinburgh's Award can be best utilised to improve engagement with people with disabilities.
 - d) Deliver a programme of presentations to disability groups to highlight opportunities in the Park.
 - e) Identify and promote funding sources to disability groups to support their engagement with the Park.

- f) Develop training and development opportunities for groups that represent people with disabilities.
24. Further ways to promote disability equality through the Park Plan is through influencing partners, eg
- a) Providing equalities training for tourism, outdoor recreation providers.
 - b) Working with transport providers to provide accessible transport.
 - c) Working with COAT to develop accessible paths and information.
 - d) Working with Ranger services to ensure they are accessible to a wider audience.

Equality Impact Assessment

25. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) forms part of our duties in implementing our DES, and is a key way to ensure that disability equality is considered in all policy development. It is intended to undertake a number of generic EqIAs which will provide templates for several areas of activity within the Operational Plan.
26. Generic EqIAs will be prepared for:
- a) Publications and print including leaflets, interpretation, visitor information and promotion
 - b) Websites including NP portal, corporate and Learning Zone
 - c) Community Engagement / working with people including holding events, meetings and venues
 - d) Training including Cairngorms Awareness and Pride, Land Based Business Training courses, and other public training
27. Individual EqIAs will be prepared for specific areas of the Operational Plan:
- a) Corporate and HR policies eg recruitment, staff training and development, accommodation
 - b) Outdoor Access – Core Paths Planning implementation, Speyside Way extension, transport, health walks
 - c) Development Plan
 - d) National Park Plan
28. We have also identified further ways to embed equality into policy and project development and procedures including through Expenditure Justification Forms, Board Papers, Grants to third parties, procurement and Programme and project management guidance.
29. Staff who are trained in EqIA and nominated Equality champions for each Group will assist with preparing EqIAs and provide support to other staff.

Inclusive Cairngorms

30. CNPA staff will continue to work closely with Inclusive Cairngorms to gain valuable advice and knowledge regarding equalities and inclusion issues and how they may impact on the CNPA's work. Their input will be particularly helpful in impact assessing CNPA policies and projects for equality. At the same time, CNPA will

promote the work of Inclusive Cairngorms and its members through quarterly meetings and the CNPA website, and by promoting case studies of good practice in equalities.

Corporate/HR

31. Many recruitment and employment actions will continue from the first DES, building on previous good practice, but there are a number of new actions as a result of gaps identified in the review:
 - a) Gathering baseline information on staff disabilities (and wider equalities needs) through appraisal process and annual staff details form.
 - b) Ensuring policies make provision for staff returning to work who may have a temporary disability.
32. Promoting disability equality is important for both CNPA staff and Board members to effectively deliver our corporate and legal responsibilities. It is therefore proposed that equalities training is provided for both staff and Board in 2010, and that this is built into new staff and new Board inductions.

Recommendation

33. **That the Board endorse the implementation of the additional actions being proposed in the DES (2009-12) that build on the previous action plan.**

Future Equality Schemes

34. A three year review of CNPA's Gender Equality Scheme and Race Equality Scheme is due in June 2010. Equality Schemes including Action Plans will require to be reviewed in consultation with user groups, and new targets set.
35. The UK Government's new Equality Bill was published in April 2009 to consolidate and simplify, and where appropriate, harmonise the various pieces of equalities legislation that have been produced over the last 40 years. It will also introduce a new single public sector duty which intends to replace the three existing duties and extend the legislation to cover the three other equality strands of age, sexual orientation, religion and belief. While the general duty is contained in the Bill, it is intended that Scottish Ministers will be given the power to develop the specific duties for Scottish public authorities (which may or may not include a duty to develop single schemes). It is foreseen that the single equality duty will come into place in 2011 at the earliest.

Recommendation

36. **That the Board note the requirement for three year reviews of CNPA's Gender Equality Scheme and Race Equality Scheme in June 2010 and be aware of the Single Equality Duty coming into force in 2011 covering all six equality strands.**

Policy Context

National Policy

37. The CNPA Equality Schemes make a significant contribution to delivering five out of fifteen of the Scottish Government's outcomes in the National Performance Framework:
- a) We live longer, healthier lives.
 - b) We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.
 - c) We live in well designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.
 - d) We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity.
 - e) Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

These five outcomes are also included within the 9 national outcomes to which the CNPA will contribute as part of our business plan for 2009/10 and 2010/11 agreed with Scottish Government.

National Park Plan

38. The guiding principles and many of the outcomes and actions set out in the National Park Plan alongside the development of a "Park for All" culture should ensure that an inclusive attitude is applied, as standard practice to the delivery of the Park Plan by the CNPA and its partners.
39. The guiding principles that set out how the CNPA and its Partners should address inequality within the Park Plan are:
- a) **"Social Justice - a National Park for All"** the CNPA has established links with inclusion and equalities groups and interests and will continue to involve them in creating opportunities for everyone to engage with the park. This includes groups that focus on Minority Ethnic, Disability and Gender interests.
 - b) **"People Participating in the Park - A National Park for People"** The CNPA has established links with inclusion groups and interests, and will continue to involve them in shaping the Park and its management.
 - c) **"Managing Change - A National Park Open to Ideas"** The CNPA will seek to listen and work with equalities groups and interests to achieve best possible solutions to manage change within the Park.

Corporate Plan Achievements

40. The CNPA's work in developing a Park for All and progressing statutory equalities schemes delivers two of the achievements set out in the Authority's Corporate Plan for 2008 to 2011.

Implement internal equalities action plans	The Authority's policies and procedures address any potential inequality of access to this organisation or the Park, while our operations fit with and are complementary to development of a strong, fair and active society
Encourage others to deliver equality action plans and meet best practice standards.	All businesses, private, public and voluntary are actively encouraged to operate in a way that meets the highest equality standards to develop a strong, fair and inclusive society.

Delivering Sustainability

41. Developing and reviewing our Equality Schemes with clear action plans with monitoring built in will mean that resources can be dedicated in a more effective manner ensuring greater impact. Involving a wide range of Partners in the development of these schemes increases a sense of collective ownership.

Delivering Economy, Effectiveness and Efficiency

42. Producing Equality Schemes will encourage a wider range of visitors to the Park. It is important to build on the existing visitor demographic base and encourage the development (and marketing) of a diverse range of transport, accommodation and activities geared to a variety requirements. Addressing recruitment and employment barriers ensures that we get the very best talent working for the Park Authority.

Financial Implications

43. Developing, implementing and reviewing Equality Schemes will take time, resources and commitment from the CNPA and its key partners (particularly Inclusive Cairngorms.) Budget provision has been made to support our activities in this area in 2009/10 from within existing budget resources. We are also continuing to work closely with Scottish National Heritage in the delivery of impact assessment training for staff and looking at other areas for collaborative working.

Presentational Implications

44. Developing and reviewing our Equality Schemes ensures that the CNPA meets its statutory duties with regards to disability, gender and race. Working in partnership with under represented groups to build a more equal, fairer and diverse Scotland, specifically, in creating opportunities for a wider sense of ownership and access to its National Parks.

Implications for Stakeholders

45. Promoting equality of opportunity through the Equality Schemes will ensure a heightened priority on equality issues and help to realise the full benefit of the National Park to Park users and service providers, egg by increasing customer base, creating new business opportunities.

46. The Equality Schemes will create a clear benchmark for not only the Authority but its partners to work towards. As the CNPA does not deliver many public services directly to Park users, it will have a key role in influencing partners and service providers to be aware of equalities issues and to demonstrate good practice in meeting the needs of all users of the Park, including minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities.

Next Steps

47. The draft DES will be revised following comment from the Board, and published on 4 December 2009. Staff will prepare a three year review of GES and RES by June 2010.

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Oct 2009

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