

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: LONG TERM RESOURCE PLANNING

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Purpose

To outline the current work being undertaken by the Authority's Management Team, coordinated by Corporate Services, on the long-term resource planning for the Authority.

Recommendations

The Board is asked to note the report, and to raise any questions on the update provided.

Executive Summary

There is considerable current uncertainty around public sector funding, both in the short and longer term. This paper outlines, for information, the preparatory work being undertaken by the Authority's Management Team in order that the resource planning for 2010/11 and future years is able to adapt to future financial settlements that the Authority is required to operate within.

2010/11 Resource Planning

1. The Authority's Management Team has been reviewing its resourcing position over the course of the summer period in anticipation of potential funding reductions in 2010/11. The current budget position has been stripped back to analyse finance across contractual commitments already in place; service commitments where approval in principle has been given by the Board and/or Finance Committee; and other uncommitted delivery plans. This work has allowed initial development of the operational plan for 2010/11 on a basis that is able to adapt to variations in funding levels.
2. The draft budget announced by Scottish Government on 17 September holds current funding broadly in line with previously announced levels. Total funding for both NPAs is set at £12.9m for 2010/11 compared with £12.7m for 2009/10.
3. Initial impressions are, therefore, that we seem unlikely to have to deal with significant reductions in funding in the forthcoming year, and the budget process for 2010/11 referred to above can concentrate on getting the balance of resource allocation across the organisation correct.
4. This budget process also complements the Authority's current review of the delivery of the National Park Plan and the re-assessment of the priority areas for delivery

over the second half of the current 5 year priorities for action. In revisiting budget allocations across the organisation, the Management Team will be able to review the priority areas and determine where future investment may be needed.

5. The Scottish Government's budget for 2010/11 still requires Parliamentary approval, and this will not happen for some months. Until Parliament approves a budget we will not have the CNPA actual allocation confirmed. There does, of course, remain a potential for current budget proposals to be varied prior to the Parliamentary approval.

Longer-term Budget Planning

6. The budget process is also being revised to ensure we begin to look forward beyond 2010/11 to future years.
7. There remains considerable uncertainty on the level of public sector finances and over the distribution of these between various areas of the public sector in the longer-term. Indeed, there remains some expectation that future funding allocations may reduce in future Comprehensive Spending Review periods.
8. The work on the budget for 2010/11 is also, therefore, being used as a base on which to plan and retain flexibility in resource allocation over the longer-term.
9. We aim to maintain a close control over levels of future commitments, including total staff numbers through managing vacancies as they arise, to ensure our position remains as flexible as possible and allow the Authority to adapt to changes in funding levels and/or priorities.

Staffing

10. Scottish Ministers have given a commitment to there being no compulsory redundancies in the Scottish Government and in NDPBs until March 2011. We have recently received a letter confirming this remains the case. All staff of the Authority therefore remain covered by this assurance until March 2011.

Next Steps

11. The work undertaken by Management Team in reviewing resource allocations is aimed at presenting a proposed Operational Plan for 2010/11 to Finance Committee and Board in January 2010.
12. In the meantime, Corporate Services staff will continue to coordinate the work on future resource planning and will engage the Finance, Audit and Staffing and Recruitment Committees at appropriate points in this process.

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