
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: NATIONAL PARK PLAN IMPLEMENTATION
PROGRESS REPORT

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Purpose

To update the Board on progress with the delivery and implementation of the National Park Plan, highlight the crucial role of the Board in championing the Park Plan's importance to people, and to present an external academic evaluation of the National Park Plan process so far (Annex 1).

NATIONAL PARK PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT – FOR INFORMATION

1. The Cairngorms National Park Authority Board formally adopted the National Park Plan on 20 April 2007, following Ministerial approval on 15th March 2007.
2. In the months since the Park Plan was adopted, the CNPA has been leading the formation and development of the three key roles that the National Park Plan's Implementation Framework sets out:
 - a) **The Priority for Action Delivery Teams**
 - b) **The National Park Advisory Forums**
 - c) **The Forward Strategy Group**

Operational Delivery – the Priority for Action Delivery Teams

3. Work has focussed on creating the Priority for Action Delivery Teams, and ensuring they produce 5-year Priority for Action delivery plans for the actions set out in the National Park Plan. The membership of these teams is largely, but not exclusively, public sector organisations simply because an important function of the National Park Plan is to co-ordinate and maximise benefit from public sector spend in the area. There are also representatives from the business, community and NGO sectors on many teams. All the organisations involved have been enthusiastic and prepared to commit resources and energy to the work.
4. At this relatively early stage in the National Park Plan's implementation, these teams are focusing on coordinating and monitoring work across the Priorities for Action, increasing communication between agencies, and establishing a constructive mechanism that can adapt to changes and challenges over the next five years. All the Delivery Teams have completed a first draft of their delivery plans and are pulling together indicators for the 5-year outcomes.
5. The "Integrating Public Support for Land Management" Priority for Action Delivery Team is the last to be formed. The CNPA focussed resources during the past few months on trying to influence how the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) would be prioritised and administered to reflect the National Park's priorities. That objective has been met, with the national and regional priorities for the SRDP now agreed or developing and able to respond to the National Park Plan's objectives and priorities.

Advice and Communication – the Advisory Forums

6. The National Park's new Advisory Forums' first meetings were held on 28 September 2007. The Advisory Forums provide a vital feedback mechanism to the Board, helping ensure a wide range of interests and perspectives comment on ongoing delivery and issues within the Park. We are now working with the Chairs of the Advisory Forums to establish a five-year programme of Advisory Forum

meetings that will link to the monitoring of the National Park Plan and to the preparation of the Park Plan annual report.

Strategic Planning Mechanism – the Forward Strategy Group

7. The Cairngorms National Park Strategy Group is made up of the Chairs and Chief Executives of Public Agencies (formally members of the Panel of Joined Up Government) as well as Chairs of the Association of Cairngorms Communities, Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce and Scottish Environment LINK. The Forward Strategy Group will meet in February 2008. It will be considering the Priority for Action Delivery Plans (in order to get high level commitment to the resources that those organisations' officers have identified are required) and an initial draft of the full Park Plan monitoring framework, including indicators for the 5 year outcomes and longer term health indicators for the Park.

Research on Development and Implementation of the National Park Plan

8. The Macaulay Institute have been commissioned by the Scottish Government's five-year Environment and Rural Stewardship Programme to evaluate the process of developing the Park Plan and its implementation. The research presents an independent review of how things, in the author's view, are progressing and makes constructive suggestions for future approaches to work and engagement with stakeholders. The study is an academic piece of work and offers some interesting observations which will help inform a future discussion on how the CNPA and the Board in particular can best engage with our stakeholders. (see Appendix 1)

Role of the CNPA in Park Plan delivery

9. The Delivery Teams, the Advisory Forums, and Strategy Group are together designed to ensure a collective and coordinated delivery of the Park Plan with all our partners. The CNPA has a lead responsibility here, but clearly that responsibility can only be delivered in conjunction with partners. The CNPA services the various groupings, and chairs many of the meetings, but the objective is to ensure that those best placed to lead Groups and to deliver actions will do so.
10. Having successfully prepared the National Park Plan, the CNPA's role remains tied to the Park Plan. There are a number of areas where the CNPA remains the leader or has particular responsibility in the Park Plan implementation process:
 - a) **Delivering** actions of the Park Plan that the CNPA is responsible for (The Board has a duty to reflect the resources needed to do this in the CNPA's corporate plan and staff will be responsible for day to day operational delivery of actions);
 - b) **Monitoring** progress on delivery across all areas of the Park Plan (This is done by staff and reported to the Board with advice on implications for future delivery and decisions that may be required by the Board);

- c) **Listening** to the Advisory Forums, individual stakeholders and the public as part of the monitoring and evaluation process (This is done by both Board and staff);
- d) **Communicating** progress on delivery to all stakeholders (This is done by both Board and staff but to different audiences. It includes a strong element of publicly **Rewarding** others for their commitment to the Park Plan, actions in delivery and contributions to the achievement of outcomes);
- e) **Persuading** others to devote resources to the co-ordinated delivery of the Park Plan (this may be the Convenor taking the Board's priorities to the Strategy Group, or between officers in Delivery Teams).
- f) Given that the CNPA plays only a minor part in the delivery of many of the actions of the Park Plan, it must also be a **Trusting** organisation if it is to make the most of its enabling role. (Much of what the Park Plan seeks to achieve is under the control of others or will be delivered by others. The Board and staff have to be able to trust those who are best placed to deliver actions and outcomes to do so, and to support them in that work)

Next Steps

- 11. The next steps in the delivery process will be:
 - a) Delivery Teams developing indicators for 5- year outcomes (Dec 2007- Feb 2008)
 - b) Strategic Planning & Policy Officer compiling 5- year outcome indicators across priorities for action, and taking forward Health Indicators work to complete a draft monitoring framework and establish research priorities (Dec 2007- Feb 2008).
 - c) Develop and agree 5-year programme for Advisory Forum involvement with Chairs of forums (Dec 2007 – Jan 2008)
 - d) Board Discussion on monitoring framework prior to Strategy Group meeting (Feb 2008)
 - e) Strategy Group meeting to consider implications of delivery plans and monitoring framework (Feb 2008)
 - f) Agree programme of Advisory Forums meetings with the next meeting taking place in Spring 2008
 - g) Preparation of National Park Plan Annual Report (April 2008 for publication June 2008)
 - h) Board Discussion on future Stakeholder Engagement (February 2008)

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30 November 2007

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