

Review of the Visitor Information that is available in print about the Cairngorms National Park

Prepared by: Murray Ferguson and Peter Crane

Purpose: To seek input to the above review from members of the ViSIT Forum

Background and purpose

1. As a result of a number of factors it is timely to review experience to date in providing information for visitors about the Park. The main drivers for undertaking such a review are:
 - the need to take stock of experience gained over first three years of the life of the Park;
 - the emergence of new players (for example the Destination Management Organisations)
 - the emergence of new commercial products (for example Park i);
 - implementation of recently completed major strategic plans including the VisitScotland Information and Sales Review and the National Park Plan; and
 - The need to find sustainable ways of funding the provision of visitor information (taking account of advertising revenue).

The **purpose** of the Review is to take stock of the experience gained from producing visitor information about the Park in print form and make recommendations for changes for implementation in the years ahead. The Review should be complete by end of February 2007.

Policy context

2. The Policy context has been worked on extensively in the last two years by VisitScotland and partners at a national level and by the National Park Authority and partners through the National Park Plan. Preparation of these plans has involved extensive stakeholder dialogue, including a specific seminar in Tomintoul that examined priorities on the development of awareness and understanding of the Park. The finalised Plan includes a number of relevant actions.
3. The Priority for Action on Raising Awareness and Understanding of the Park in the Park Plan includes the following actions:

2a	Promote the existing Tourist Information Centres, visitor centres and ranger bases as the key places to get information about the Park and visibly link these places to the Park in a significant way.	CNPA, LAs, Ranger Services, SNH, VS
2b	Identify the other key places in and around the Park where there is a need or opportunity to get messages across and then make suitable modifications.	CNPA, DMOs, LECs, Visitor Attractions, VS
2d	Install visitor information and Park-wide interpretation at key entry points to Park.	CNPA, Communities, LAs, Land Managers, LECs
4a	Develop a customer-oriented website about the Park that meets needs of visitors, residents and others, acting as an entry level portal to other websites.	ACCC, CCC, CNPA, LAs, LECs, VS
4c	Develop a suite of publications about the special	CNPA,

	qualities of the National Park and how to enjoy them responsibly.	Communities, DMOs, HS, RCHAMS, SCT, SNH, VS
4d	Co-ordinate print and web material about the National Park to meet visitors' information needs, from pre-arrival through to their destination.	CCC, CNPA, DMOs, LAs, VS

Scope of the review

4. The provision of information for visitors in the National Park is potentially a huge topic, using multiple channels of communication and is delivered by a wide range of partners. It is necessary to scope the review tightly if it is to be meaningful. The scope of this review includes:
 - a) Format, design and "the look" of publications about the Park
 - b) Target audience
 - c) Circulation and distribution arrangements

5. The review specifically does not include:
 - a) Non-print information (e.g. websites, etc)
 - b) Information about the National Park that is contained within other publications whose primary purpose is different to providing information about the Park
 - c) Information provided about particular individual attractions within the Park

Methodology

6. The review will focus on visitors' information needs and will comprise four separate elements:
 - Desk study of best practice in providing visitor information in print in other UK National Parks
 - Invitation of feedback from front line staff in the National Park through a questionnaire
 - Workshop style discussion with members of the Visit Forum (January 2007)
 - Discussion with VisitScotland about the results arising from the national review.

Visitor information and the visitor life cycle

5. It is useful to consider existing provision of information against the various stages that visitors go through when planning to visit an area and Table 1 provides some prompts. We should be aware, however, that Cairngorms NP attracts a high number of repeat visitors.

Table 1: Visitor Information in print and the Visitor Life Cycle

Visitor life cycle	Primary purpose (lead body)
Unaware	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome leaflet (CNPA) • Marketing campaigns and leaflets (VS and DMOs)
Planning the visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cairngorms Explorer (transport timetable) (CNPA)
Arrival and stay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor Guide (VS) • Park I (private sector) • Landmark Bedroom folder Insert (CNPA) • Cairngorms Countryside Events Guide (CNPA) • Activities Outdoors (Aviemore and Cairngorms DMO) • Place-names of the Cairngorms NP (CNPA) • Hill-tracks in the Cairngorms NP (Scotways) • LBAP leaflets about special qualities and threats to biodiversity – amphibians, swifts, alien invasion
Return visit and recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing specifically designed with this purpose

ViSIT workshop

6. Three short sessions will be held (probably in small groups, depending on the numbers) on three basic topics:

Question	Issues to consider
1. What happens well now or is not so good? Why? How could we improve on it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive and negative feedback is required • The publications (content, design, etc) and their distribution
2. What information do visitors want that is currently missing? How can we fill the gap? Which gaps are most important to fill in next few years?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is lots of information out there – what do people need that is currently difficult to give them? • The balance of provision across the visitor life cycle (see Table 1).
3. How can we make the most of existing opportunities to link the information that is available to the whole of the National Park?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking smaller areas of the Park to the whole National Park • Providing comprehensive information about the whole National Park