
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust – Business Plan 2009 to 2011

Prepared by: Bob Grant, Senior Outdoor Access Officer

Purpose

This paper highlights the work already delivered in the first year of operation of the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust and seeks support for the range of work to be undertaken in the next two years as detailed in the draft Business Plan.

Recommendations

That the Board:

- a) Notes the progress towards achieving the agreed outputs in the 2008/09 Business Plan;
- b) Notes the close fit between the outputs in the future Business Plan for 2009-11 with the Priority for Actions contained in the National Park Plan; and
- c) Approves a CNPA contribution of £365,000 over the next two financial years.

Executive Summary

The Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust is mid way through its first year of operation and is now at the stage of developing a programme of works for the subsequent two years. The Business Plan provides an indication of likely financial support and the scale of work that is planned to be undertaken in the period.

CAIRNGORMS OUTDOOR ACCESS TRUST – BUSINESS PLAN 2009 TO 2011 FOR DECISION

Background

1. The Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. It came into being in April 2008 and evolved from the Upper Deeside Access Trust. In May 2008 the Cairngorms National Park Authority Board approved a contribution of £150,000 towards the delivery of the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust's 2008/09 business plan. The Board also approved two nominees to be Directors of the Trust and these are Dave Fallows and David Cameron. The Trust recognised that the first year of operation would be one of establishing itself across the National Park and building credibility amongst potential funders and interest groups. CNPA Board also recognised that year one was one of transition but had a strong wish to see greater partner support in future years.

2008/09 Objectives

2. The business plan identified four broad areas of work and these are:
 - a) Path networks around communities;
 - b) Mountain paths and strategic routes;
 - c) Associated visitor infrastructure;
 - d) Health and well being

Path networks around communities

3. Progress on individual projects is highlighted below:
 - a) A survey and full specification has been prepared for the school path in Strathdon and the route will be built to all ability standards. A funding application for this work has been made to the Climate Challenge Fund and a decision is expected in early December. The work will be going ahead in quarter four of this financial year. The new bridge across the Don is currently being designed by a civil engineer with the construction due to go ahead in 2009/10.
 - b) The Gynack bridge in Kingussie has received planning permission and is likely to attract Leader funding. Tenders will be sought within the next fortnight with a view to construction commencing in December.
 - c) Tarland paths have been surveyed and a specification prepared. The work is scheduled to be undertaken in Quarter four of this financial year.
 - d) The annual maintenance programme is well underway and scheduled to be completed to time.

- e) Additional work was offered to COAT to manage path works on the Deeside Way and this project is underway. This element of work is fully funded by Aberdeenshire Council.

Mountain paths

4. The initial workshop with interested parties was held in March 2008 and each of the prioritised paths will be subject to a full condition survey. At the middle of October 65% of the paths have been completed and the remainder will be finished by December 2008. A workshop is planned for early 2009 to share the information from the survey and to agree the priorities for the next stage. This will result in a large scale upland paths project which is scheduled to commence in 2010.

Visitor infrastructure

5. This work is largely on hold until the paths signs guidance is complete and the template agreed for community path leaflets. COAT will be piloting the template in Quarter four with new leaflets planed for Braemar and Ballater. In addition, replacement information panels are being prepared for both these communities.

Health and Wellbeing

6. There are now eight health walking schemes operating under the auspices of COAT with a new group now running in Strathdon.

Recommendation

7. **The Board notes the progress towards achieving the agreed outputs in the 2008/09 Business Plan.**

Business Plan for 2009-11

8. The Business Plan for 2009-11 is shown at Annex 1 to this document and the themes identified continue to closely reflect the Priorities for Action contained in the National Park Plan. The themes are shown below:
 - a) Path networks around communities
 - b) Health and wellbeing
 - c) Mountain path project
 - d) Associated visitor infrastructure
 - e) Promotion and marketing of outdoor access
9. The most significant change to note in the next two years is the level of funding support that this programme of works is likely to attract. In the current year, and as part of the pump priming required to start the Trust, CNPA contributed £150,000 towards a programme of works that

total £218,000. The significant changes in the next two years can be seen in the table below.

Table 1

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
CNPA grant & %	£150,000 (69%)	£180,000 (35%)	£185,000 (25%)
Total funds	£218,000	£515,000	£755,000

10. The funding sources are detailed in business plan with up to £600,000 being targeted at delivering community based path networks over the 2 years. The upland project is scheduled to commence in 2010 and is projected to require a 5 year time frame to deliver. Cost estimates for this project are between £2m - £3m. A supporting expenditure justification form can be seen at Annex 2 to this paper.

Recommendation

11. **That the Board notes the close fit between the outputs in the future Business Plan for 2009-11 with the Priority for Actions contained in the National Park Plan; and approves a CNPA contribution of £365,000 over the next two financial years.**

Policy Context

12. There is a very close fit with the proposed business plan and 'Developing High Quality Opportunities for Outdoor Access' – The relevant Priority for Action with in the National Park Plan. At a Scottish level, the development of improved access around and between communities and the development of health walks contribute directly to targets relating to improve the nation's health and wellbeing.

Delivering Sustainability

13. Providing better quality paths that are useable by a broader range of people can assist in encouraging sustainable transport and reduction in the use of fossil fuels.

Delivering A Park for All

14. Good quality paths, close to where people live, catering for multi-use, can assist in expanding the range of people who are presently excluded from enjoying the special qualities of the National Park.

Delivering Economy, Effectiveness and Efficiency

15. The Board recognised that a Trust, operating at arms length from the Park Authority, provides the best model for being flexible and able to quickly react to changing needs. The Trust is well placed to attract external funding and this is starting to prove the case with the regard to the future business plan.

Implications

Financial Implications

16. The financial implications are detailed in the expenditure justification form which is shown at Annex 2.

Presentational Implications

17. The business plan is exciting and will show actual delivery on the ground to a wide range of communities. There are presentational benefits to the Trust to demonstrate delivery and to the Park Authority and funding partners in working towards common goals for the good of both residents and visitors to the National Park.

Implications for Stakeholders

18. The delivery of the business plan will meet the needs of a number of stakeholders including funding partners and communities.

Bob Grant
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bobgrant@cairngorms.co.uk