For information

Title: Website update

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Purpose

This paper presents an update of current website activity including a strategic risk register and accompanying mitigation measures.

Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

a)   Review activity on the website, including procurement process followed / budget position.

b)   Review the accompanying risk register to ensure key risks are captured and that mitigation measures are appropriate.

Strategic context

1.   The new Cairngorms National Park website was procured via a two-stage Public Contracts Scotland process: an initial Single Procurement Document (SPD) phase which required contractors to supply three relevant case studies for scoring; and a final tender phase where shortlisted agencies were given the full tender document to respond to.

2.   A total of 43 agencies took part in the SPD round and this was whittled down to a shortlist of seven agencies, with six responding to the final tender document. After a detailed scoring process and interview round, Fife-based Whereverly were appointed at the end of October 2023.

3.   The initial value of the contract was set at £250,000 inclusive of VAT over a five-year period, which benchmarked with similar scale projects at National Museums Scotland and Glasgow Life. Whereverly's proposal came in at £139,174 inclusive of VAT, with two further developments (on mapping and consultations) taking that total to £189,094 inclusive of VAT.

4. After over a year of complex development work, the new website was launched in beta (or testing) mode in April. The site includes a number of new communities, wildlife and landscape pages – capitalising on high Google search traffic for these topics – as well as over 50 project pages covering the work of the Park Authority and partners.

5. A new site-wide alerts system – linked directly to our social media posts – allows us to provide critical updates on emerging issues such as wildfires and extreme weather, path closures, species breeding periods etc, and to automatically serve these messages on every webpage where they are relevant. A dynamic, Ordnance Survey-powered mapping tool includes details on key communities, events, paths and points of interest, whilst our new content finder allows visitors to filter and search for content that would previously have been buried deep in the site structure. This includes a new Artificial Intelligence (AI) driven document summary feature, which means even previously inaccessible Portable Document Format (PDF) can be summarised and read eg by screen reader users.

6. The beta site has sat alongside our existing website for a period of just over a month to gather user feedback, stress test the new site and continue the process of adding content – in particular news and views – before the old site is switched off in mid-June.

7. New content is being added daily, and the team are working hard with colleagues across the organisation to create, review, edit and consolidate thousands of pages of content. Further user research has been undertaken with residents and visitors, with a particular focus on accessibility and users with additional needs, ensuring that the site meets and exceeds accessibility standards.

Risk register

8. We have developed a specific risk register for our Communications and Engagement activities which is presented to Governance Committee on a quarterly basis. We have copied over the relevant section on the website development project below for reference. Unless otherwise stated, the risk owner is the Head of Communications and Engagement. Assessment of likelihood and impact from last quarter's report are shown in brackets.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Complexity of website development project – plus resource requirements elsewhere (eg tackling digital disinformation, managing for visitors' activity etc) – leads to a delay in project delivery.	Medium (medium)	Low (medium)	• New beta site already launched, with clear roadmap to switchover to full live site. • Dedicated project management resource identified separate to the delivery of wider digital activity. • Agency payment tied to delivery of key elements of the project. • Web working group created to spread workload re. populating the new website with content. • Senior Management Team (SMT) buy-in secured to ensure all teams feedback on any issues / missing elements on the beta site before switchover occurs.

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