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# CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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## FOR DECISION

**Title:** Corporate Plan: Review of Current and Future Status

**Prepared by:** Management Team

### Purpose

To review progress with delivering current corporate plan, and consider implications for next plan.

### Recommendations

That the Board:

- a) **Agree** the extension of the current corporate plan, with modifications as described, to March 2012;
- b) **Note** the progress with delivery of the corporate plan as measured against milestones in the Plan, and against KPIs related to Scottish Government outcomes;
- c) **Note** a set of CNPA “working” principles to describe how the CNPA goes about its work between now and March 2012.

### Executive Summary

The current corporate plan (2008-11) is now in its third year of delivery of 46 achievements centred around the 7 priorities for action in the National Park Plan. Progress, measured in terms of corporate plan milestones, and KPIs related to the Scottish Government outcomes, has been reasonably successful. A number of achievements have already been or are soon to be delivered, and some require further work but remain relevant. It would make sense to have the next corporate plan running in parallel with the next National Park Plan, i.e. starting in 2012. We therefore propose that the current corporate plan is extended, with some modifications, for a further year.

The Comprehensive Spending review will be published in the autumn this year. This may require further modifications to the existing/extended Corporate Plan, even though its format remains unchanged. However, during the coming 12 months we will start to prepare a completely new Corporate Plan, taking account of the emerging National Park Plan and the CNPA’s role in delivering it. It is likely that a fundamental review of the CNPA’s priorities will be needed as part of this work, in light of the constraints on public expenditure.

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## **CORPORATE PLAN: REVIEW OF CURRENT AND FUTURE STATUS - FOR DECISION**

### **Introduction**

1. The current corporate plan (2008/11) sets out 46 achievements, under the headings of the 7 Priorities for Action in the current Cairngorms National Park Plan, plus three internally focused streams of work. Our corporate plan is therefore structured to show how the CNPA's activities will contribute to the delivery of the current National Park Plan (2007/12) agreed with all our partners, and approved by Scottish Ministers.
2. We regularly report to the Board on progress with delivery, and last did so in May this year. Because we are in the last year of the corporate plan we are taking this opportunity to review how much of the current plan has been delivered, and to what extent it remains a valid basis as our corporate plan for a further year. The advantage of extending the current plan in this way is that it would allow for the next 3 year corporate plan to be a complete revision which takes account of the new National Park Plan, with its new set of priorities, and both would run from April 2012. In both cases, the new Plans would reflect the economic realities expected to emerge from the Spending Review in autumn this year.

### **Measuring Delivery of the Corporate Plan**

#### **46 Achievements**

3. The corporate plan 2008/11 set out 46 strategic outcomes ("achievements") which the Authority sought to work towards over the 3 year period to March 2011. As the 46 achievements are described on an outcome basis, determining whether they are delivered can be difficult, often requiring detailed survey work or polling to establish whether intended outcomes have happened. To assist in monitoring, the Authority's Corporate Plan sets out a series of milestones – measurable outputs or indicators – which, if met, would indicate that activities undertaken were making a significant contribution to delivering the strategic outcomes.

#### **Scottish Government Outcomes**

4. The Achievements also indicate the means by which the Authority makes a contribution to 9 of the 15 National Outcomes established by Scottish Government within the National Performance Framework. This encapsulates the place of the Cairngorms National Park Authority as an NDPB established by Scottish Government, in contributing to the Scottish Government's Purpose: "creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all to flourish through increasing sustainable economic growth."
5. We have devised (and agreed with the Scottish Government) a small number of key performance indicators (KPIs) which allow quantitative metrics to be established and trend information developed to complement our performance management systems. These KPIs measure the Authority's contribution to delivering both the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan and also to the 9 Scottish Government National Outcomes aligned to the work of the Authority.

## Conclusions on Delivery

6. The status of the Authority's performance against the 46 corporate plan achievements has been reported regularly to the Board, with the 6<sup>th</sup> update report presented in May 2010.
7. On review of the latest position in delivering the Corporate Plan, and in considering whether the plan remained a valid basis for setting out our corporate objectives for a further year, Management Team has concluded:
  - a) It remains logical to retain the corporate plan structure based on the 7 priorities for action in the current National Park Plan (2007-2012) together with 3 strands of activity around the Authority's organisational development / corporate support functions, planning activity, and communications & strategy activities. The question is therefore whether the 46 achievements under each of the priorities for action remain valid.
  - b) 6 achievements had been completed by the end of the second year of the plan (shown in blue in Annex 2). It is proposed these are replaced with 6 new achievements to take forward activity in these areas over the remaining 18 months to March 2012.
  - c) 3 achievements have been progressed as far as possible, and while still relevant, it makes more sense to integrate them into other areas of activity. (e.g. achievements 9 and 10 merged under Sustainable Deer Management).
  - d) 4 new strategic outcomes have been identified to address new circumstances (e.g. the boundary extension of the National Park).
  - e) With the remaining achievements, good progress has been made, but in some cases there is no obvious end-point at which to stop further work and they remain relevant. Therefore the wording has been updated to ensure clarity in what we are doing over the next 18 months. Strategic outcomes set in early 2008 have inevitably shifted slightly in emphasis in some cases as the practical opportunities for delivering them have evolved. So while the general thrust of a stream of work may not have changed, the emphasis, and the way it will be delivered, may have. (for example, now the Core paths plan has been adopted, our focus shifts to ensuring that the network is fit for purpose.)
8. Overall, the Management Team's review of the Corporate Plan has found that the general structure of the Plan, together with some adjustments to a number of outcomes, means that it remains fit for purpose to March 2012. (Note: there are now 48 specified achievements). Initial discussion with the Scottish Government sponsor division suggests they are comfortable with this proposal; if the Board are content, we will seek formal approval from the sponsor division.
9. **Annex 1** provides a summary of the revised Corporate Plan, with the Strategic Outcomes (achievements) under each of the priorities for action, and a narrative explaining the rationale behind the approach we are taking.
10. **Annex 2** simply sets out more detail for reference. It shows the proposed achievements to March 2012 set against the original versions adopted in the Corporate Plan 2008/11 in order to give an audit trail of the changes. It also sets out a revised series of milestones for 2010/11 and 2011/12 against which to gauge progress in delivering these target outcomes. These will be the milestones against which we report over the next 18 months.

## Alignment with the Scottish Government’s National Outcomes – “Scotland Performs”

11. The CNPA has previously agreed with Scottish Government that there is a meaningful alignment between the role and work of the National Park Authority and 9 of the 15 national outcomes, and through those outcomes, a contribution to delivery of the Scottish Government’s purpose – *to create a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable growth.*
12. The CNPA is making a particularly significant contribution the following 9 national outcomes.

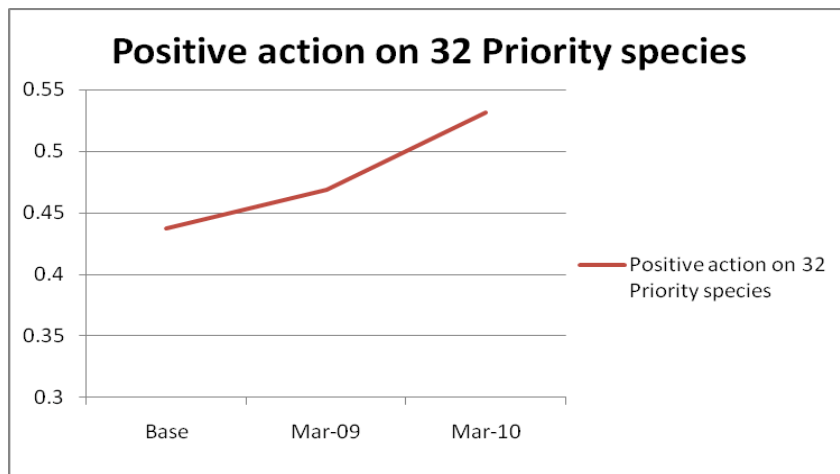
	Scottish Government National Outcome	Examples of how CNPA contributes
2	We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.	Support for sustainable tourism; delivery through Business Partnership. LBBT training project; implementing infrastructure projects such as signage, Economic baseline survey; promoting business benefits from using the Cairngorms Brand.
6	We live longer, healthier lives	Developing access opportunities – Core paths, Speyside way extension; support to COAT; health walks.
7	We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society	Equalities work; Inclusive Cairngorms forum; Cairngorms on a shoestring; educational work to get NPs into National curriculum. Local Plan provides for high levels of affordable housing.
10	We live in well designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need	Local Plan for the National Park; supplementary planning guidance; development management service to deal with planning applications.
11	We have strong, resilient supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.	Community engagement work as part of NPP2 and LDP – building on Community Needs initiative, now rolled out across the Park, and developing community action plans; support from LEADER programme;
12	We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations	Landscape framework and enhancement of wildness; projects to conserve priority species such as wildcat; biological recording system in place. Land management support to help land managers deliver the aims of the Park. Support for ranger services; local plan and National Park Plan in place to focus activity of all public sector on looking after the National Park.
13	We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity	Community Heritage project; Development of Cairngorms Brand; presenting Cairngorms NP through work with ANPA, and through international conferences and papers. John Muir award scheme.
14	We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production	Clim-atic project – woodfuel initiative; electric car; courses through LBBT on renewable energy. Internal Greening group in organisation.
15	Our public services are high quality, continually improving,	Openness and transparency in all our meetings; clear website; constant review through Best

	Scottish Government National Outcome	Examples of how CNPA contributes
	efficient and responsive to peoples' needs.	Value reports to audit committee. Prepare and oversee delivery of National Park Plan. Delivery of annual efficiency programme; shared services project with LL&TT NPA.

- 13. There are typically multiple links between each of our Corporate Plan strategic outcomes and the National Outcomes. For example, our corporate plan priority of “providing high quality opportunities for outdoor access” provides for several achievements in the Corporate Plan, which contribute to several of the Scottish Government outcomes above – outcomes 6, 10, 12 for example.
- 14. We demonstrate the CNPA’s contribution to the National Outcomes through the adopted KPIs. An illustration from our KPI measurement of the Authority’s delivery of its Corporate Plan Outcomes and contribution to these National Outcomes is presented below.

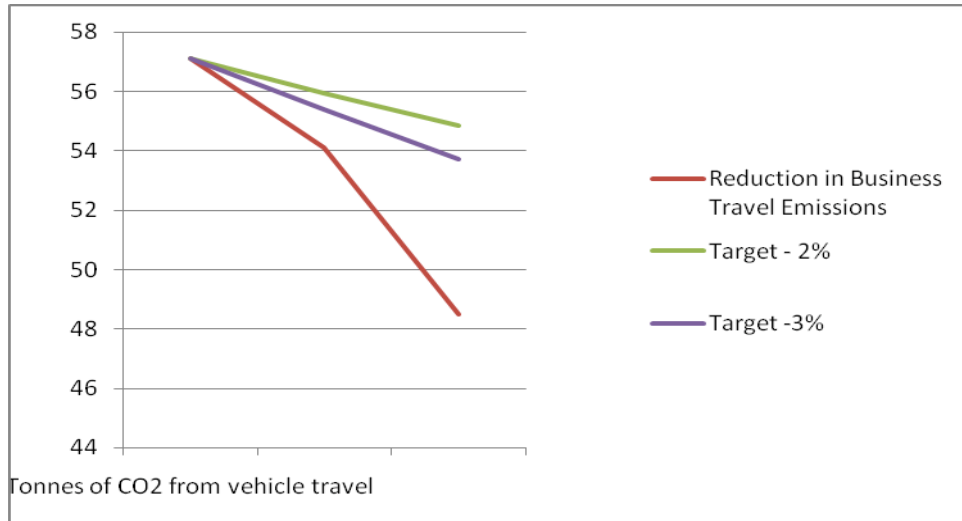
***Delivering an Ongoing Increase in the Number of Priority Species for which Priority Action is Underway***

- 15. This KPI links primarily to Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Landscapes within the Corporate Plan, and to outcomes 10, 12 and 14 as set out in the table above. The chart sets out the proportion of the 32 priority species adopted in the Cairngorms local biodiversity action plan, for which positive conservation action is currently underway.



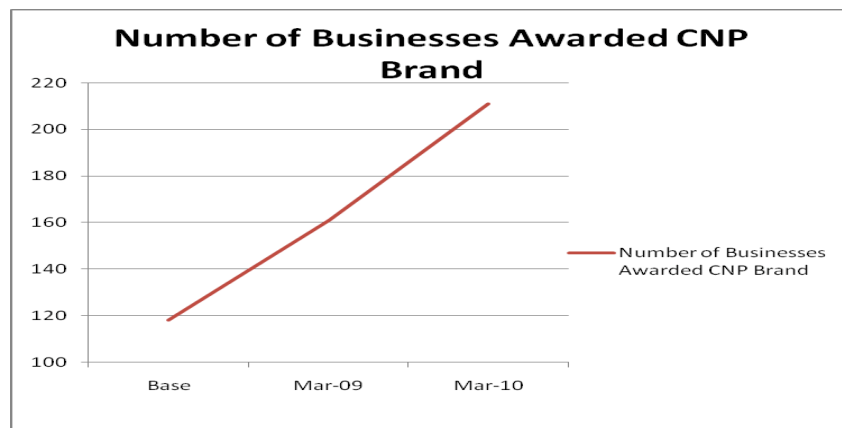
***Reducing the Authority’s Carbon Emissions from Vehicle Based Business Travel***

- 16. This KPI measures the Authority’s own leadership on tackling climate change – an element of both the priority on supporting land management and our internal organisational development and corporate support service improvements. The KPI also links to national outcomes 12, 14 and 15.
- 17. The Chart highlights the trend in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from vehicle based business travel undertaken by staff and Board members.



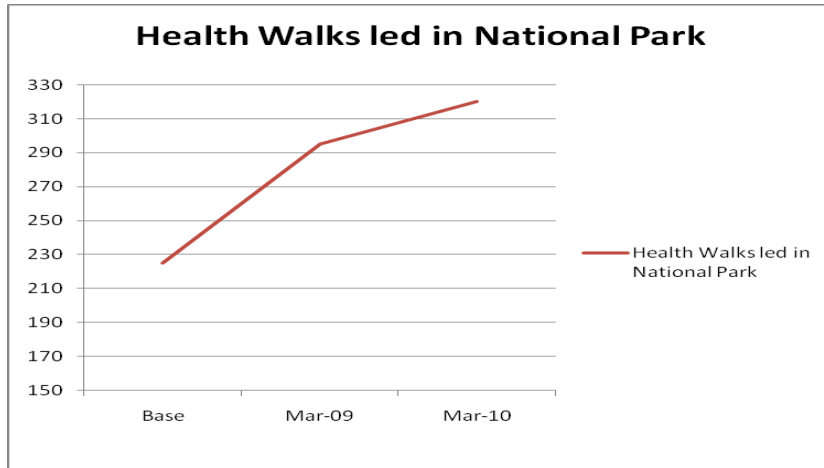
**Delivering an Ongoing Increase in the Number of Businesses Awarded the National Park Brand**

18. This KPI incorporates measurement of the broadening awareness of the National Park through roll out of the National Park Brand. In focusing on business uptake, the KPI also measures the progress of the priority around making business and tourism more sustainable, through the requirement to satisfy sustainability / environmental management criteria in successfully applying for the Brand. In identifying the National Park as a key element of the identity of Scotland, the KPI is used as a proxy indicator in the CNPA’s contribution to outcome 13, a strong national identity, in addition to outcomes 2 and 14. Outcome 2, realising our full economic potential, is linked through this proxy indicator on the basis that businesses satisfying the brand criteria, and seeking to use this brand identity within their overall business development, will strengthen their operations and take advantage of new market opportunities.



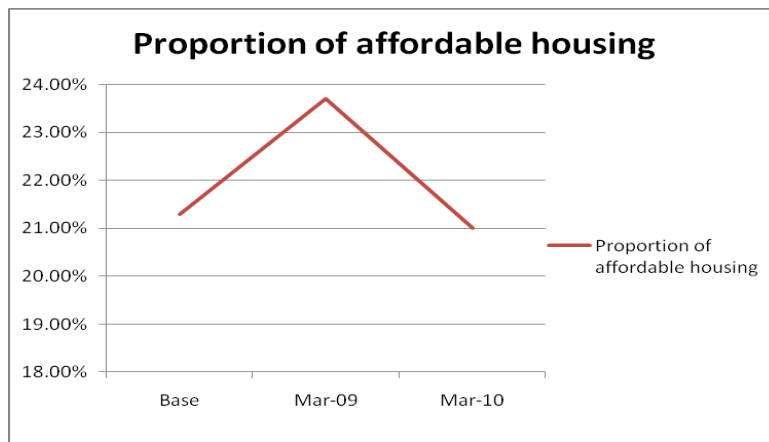
**Annual Increase in the Number of Health Walks Led within the National Park**

19. This KPI combines a focus on the Corporate Plan priority of providing high quality opportunities for outdoor access, with underlying requirement for a good quality access infrastructure needed to underpin this activity, with the Scottish Government National Performance Framework recognition of the role of National Parks in encouraging people to exercise in the outdoors more frequently – outcome 6. There are also linkages to outcomes 10 and 12.



**An Increase in the Proportion of Affordable Housing within Approved Developments**

20. This KPI demonstrates the impact of our work on affordable housing priorities, while linking to National Outcomes 7, 10 and 11.



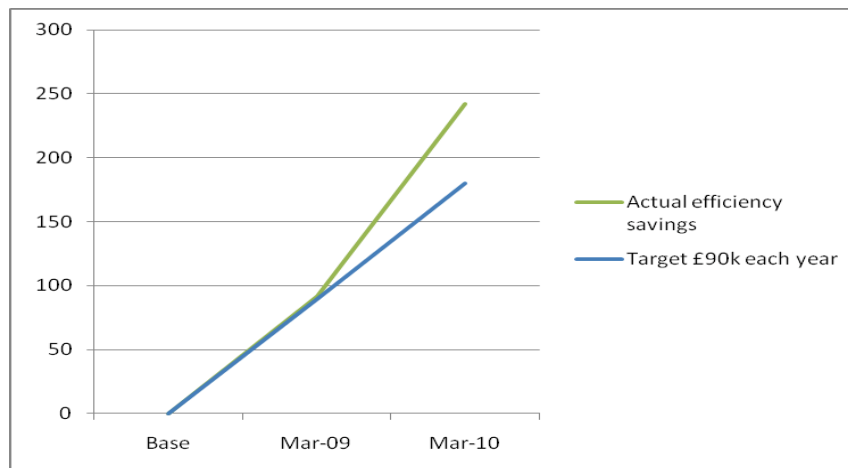
**Increase in the Number of Park Communities Covered by Community Action Plans**

21. This KPI demonstrates progress on achievements set out in the Corporate Plan on developing sustainable communities and sustainable rural development. There is also a clear link to national outcomes 11 and 10.



**Achieve Annual 2% Efficiency Savings**

22. The KPI on efficiency savings demonstrates the Authority's ability to deliver quality services (as assessed more generally by wider balanced scorecard measures) while managing within the resource budgets set. There is a clear link to national outcome 15.
23. The KPI in the chart below demonstrates the actual level of cash-releasing efficiency savings against the target of an additional £90,000 saving each year.

**Priorities to 2012 – and beyond**

24. The current corporate plan sets out our “priorities” in the sense of the 46 (now 48) achievements we are working to deliver. The Spending review in the autumn may well require us to deliver more significant cuts over the next 5 years. Management Team has done some preliminary work on options, but there is little merit in seriously considering options at Board level until we know what resources we are dealing with. More to the point, our Corporate plan logically must take its lead from the National Park Plan with the next one only being finalised through consultation with partners during 2011.
25. In the meantime, we are ensuring we are well prepared for what might emerge from the spending review by keeping close control over our forward commitments, on which the Finance Committee receives reports. In all but exceptional circumstances, we effectively have a freeze on external recruitment of staff (as advised by Scottish Government), and we are looking closely at every available opportunity to cut our costs.
26. This very close management of external recruitment of staff means that natural wastage is gradually reducing our staffing complement, with the consequence that each time this happens, we have to work out how we re-deploy our resources, what we will do less intensively, and even postpone altogether. This is beginning to impact on what we do, and there may be some loss in our ability to deliver the Corporate Plan. Some examples will emerge through other papers being considered by the Board at this meeting.
27. In the meantime, the budget review in autumn 2010, which we expect to lead to substantial cuts across the public sector, will require us to fundamentally review the CNPA's strategic plans. That thinking will feed into modifying how we deploy

resources in the current corporate plan, but importantly, the nature and structure of the next corporate plan.

28. Without prejudice to the Board’s deliberations on future priorities, this part of the paper introduces a set of principles which Management Team developed at the turn of the year to help focus difficult decisions ahead; it was also linked to the thinking behind the restructuring at senior level. These “principles” do not replace the current corporate plan, and do not introduce any new streams of work or objectives. But they sit above the 48 achievements, by re-phrasing what we do in terms of a relatively small number of “themes” which encapsulate a sense of “why” and how we are doing and not just “what” we are doing. They make clear:
- a) Those lines of work which are priorities in the sense that they are statutory obligations for this organisation – namely our planning function (development management service and a Local Plan), the access function, and the preparation and delivery of the National Park Plan. These cannot be cut altogether – although the issue of how much resource you need to deliver these functions to the appropriate standard remains a matter to consider.
  - b) It is also the case that planning decisions are probably the most high profile part of our work, which has the most significant immediate impact on individuals and long term impact on the landscape of the Park.
  - c) To deliver a successful National Park we have to lever in the efforts (and sometimes funding) of others, so they have some sense of ownership of this National Park – this applies to private, public and third sectors. The CNPA cannot deliver the Park Plan on its own; so enabling and empowering others determines “how” we go about delivering the achievements/ strategic outcomes in our corporate plan.
  - d) That the land based sector is self-evidently important in determining the appearance of the National park.
  - e) Tourism in its widest sense, is essential to the economy of the area and is one of the most obvious streams of work connecting up all four aims of the National Park.

<b>CNPA Principles 2010-2012</b>	<b>SGov O/C</b>
Set the <u>strategic framework</u> for coordinated action by partners (through the National Park Plan 2012-17, and the Local Plan) to deliver a world class National Park; and oversee delivery of the Plans.	15
Provide a first class, public facing, responsive <u>planning service</u> which ensures that built development is of sustainable design, and meets the needs of local people and the environment.	2,10,12
Help to ensure the <u>land based sector</u> can continue to create/maintain the special qualities which underpin the existence of the National Park through its landscape, biodiversity, its character and identity, the local economy, and provision of opportunities for recreation.	12
Enabling and <u>empowering local communities</u> and communities of interest to create and manage the Park.	11
Provide a <u>communications, education and information</u> service for the National Park which ensures a coordinated approach by ourselves and partners in raising awareness of the National Park and its special qualities, keeping everyone well informed and enthusiastic about progress with delivery of the Park Plan, and	11,12,13

<b>CNPA Principles 2010-2012</b>	<b>SGov O/C</b>
securing good engagement of communities of interest and place.	
Help to ensure the CNP secures a reputation as an exemplar <u>sustainable tourism destination</u> through helping to make tourism “everyone’s business” in the National Park bringing together economic, social and environmental interests, and specifically (for CNPA) through facilitating the provision of high quality recreational access opportunities,	2,6
<b>4 cross cutting priorities which are reflected in all the above:</b>	
Biodiversity (2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity)	12
Enlargement of the Park to include northern Perthshire	12
Supporting the delivery of the targets in the Climate Change Act through all our activities.	14
Play our part in SEARS, and more specifically work with LL&TT NPA to deliver shared services.	6, 15

### **Future Developments**

29. The rationale for extending the current corporate plan is essentially to enable us to deal with the hiatus we face over the coming 18 months. This paper sets out strategy for managing our way through the closing years of the current Corporate and National Park Plans, against a background of restrictions in budget which are expected, but are uncertain in amount.
  
30. The finance committee is receiving regular updates on how we are managing our expenditure, and in particular, how we are keeping control of our forward commitments. Currently we have considerable headroom in the next two years within which to make decisions after the spending review in the autumn on what we continue to fund, and what we have to halt work on. We cannot become paralysed into inactivity because of uncertainty, and decisions about future commitments will continue to come forward – there are several in today’s Board papers. In each case we will advise on our scope for forward commitment, and where appropriate, it may be a decision in principle with quantum to be split into commitments now, with further amounts to be confirmed at a later date. Over the coming year, Members will be able to take a considered view on what the CNPA’s priorities should be over the next 5 years.
  
31. As cuts in funding and staff complement bite, we may need to come back to the Board if delivery of the corporate plan is going to be compromised. We do in any event report back to the Board several times in year on delivery.

**Jane Hope**  
**On behalf of Management Team**  
**5 August 2010**