
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: FUTURE TRAINING DELIVERY IN THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK

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Purpose:

For the Board to endorse the proposed Training Project (2011-2013) and funding package.

Recommendations

That the Board:

- a) Endorses the three described strands of the future training project.
- b) Approves £80k per year for each of the next three years to deliver the training project described.
- c) Remit to MT authority to agree detailed design of the project.

Executive Summary

The current funding package for the successful LBBT/CAP project is ending. We wish to build on past success and deliver a new training role closely aligned to current and emerging priorities in the National Park Plan. To that end a new training project is outlined containing three strands:

- a) Developing young people whilst in employment in land based businesses
- b) Responsive support for the training of land based businesses
- c) Pro-active delivery of training events

Together these three strands, along with described changes to delivery achieve alignment with the National Park Plan and whilst retaining a focus on land based businesses also amount to a relatively significant evolution from the current project.

FUTURE TRAINING DELIVERY IN THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK – FOR DECISION

Introduction

- 1 In January 2010 a paper “The Role of Training in the Delivery of the National Plan” was taken to the Board exploring how the CNPA should take forward its role in the development of training within the Park, building on the significant success of both the Land Based Business Training Project (LBBTP) and the Cairngorms Awareness and Pride (CAP) projects.
- 2 The Board approved a set of guiding principles (Annex 1) providing a steer to staff in taking forward the training agenda. They also approved a set of training themes (Annex 2) as the basis for further development work with partners leading to the preparation of funding applications.
- 3 The January Board paper was followed by a paper to the finance committee in February, outlining in broad terms a new training project (Jan 2011-Dec 2013). *In principle* the committee agreed to £80,000 per year for three years so that match funders could be approached from a position of certainty on CNPA commitment, with a requirement to return to the Board for sign-off of the detailed project plan.
- 4 Deadlines have dictated that an application has been made to ESF for the project outlined below. The application is clearly subject to approval from the CNPA Board. We will have opportunity to make minor changes to the application subsequent to Board and if the Board is so minded, have the ability to withdraw the application.

Work to date

- 5 The Land Based Business training project was established in 2004 to
 - a) Support land based businesses to grow and operate more sustainably
 - b) To enable those businesses to contribute more effectively to the delivery of the statutory aims of the Park.
- 6 Since 2004 the project has offered 4,800 training places and invested over £1m on training for primarily, land based businesses in or adjacent to the Cairngorms National Park. The project has contributed to the creation and maintenance of a positive working relationship between land based businesses and the National Park Authority. Whilst it is difficult to conclusively prove that any particular business thrives today because of training say 5 years ago, the project has clearly resulted in improved skill levels in the land based sector.
- 7 In addition to this direct support for training project staff regularly support CNPA officers who seek to organise and hold training meetings/events and so provide to the authority an expert event organisation service with knowledge including meeting design, venues, caterers and trainers. Thus the project provides a specialist service available, subject to capacity to the wider authority. The project also delivers a sign-posting or brokerage service directing people toward the training they seek.

- 8 This work has contributed toward actions under all of the priorities for action in the current National Park Plan.
- 9 The project has been reviewed regularly, most recently by Hecla/Roberts (2009) who stated “there is a strong case for public funding to support skills and training activity within the National Park on economic efficiency and distributional grounds.”

The value in enabling training

- 10 Training (the development of skills, confidence and learning in others) is a key mechanism in achieving the National Strategic Outcomes in the Scottish Government’s Performance Framework for example Outcome 2: “*We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people,*”
- 11 CNPA has enabled training for approximately 6 years and this has equipped people with the skills, knowledge and confidence to contribute to achievement of the aims of the Park and the vision of the National Park Plan. Delivering and supporting training is arguably the most effective mechanism at the disposal of the Park Authority to leverage enhanced management of the Park. It is also a means by which the Authority can respond to specific needs that arise from the area being a National Park. And there are also considerable additional benefits that come from a training programme in the form of relationship building, networking and communications with and between beneficiaries of the training project. There have also been instances where people on courses have subsequently asked for the contact information of others in order to offer freelance work so bringing clear economic benefit to businesses.

The training landscape in the Park

- 12 Annex 3 shows training provision in and adjacent to the National Park, this focuses on the training available to land based businesses and is not exhaustive. This demonstrates that a great variety of subjects is available. For the CNPA to add value in this landscape requires focus on the aims of the Park, the steer from the National Park Plan and the themes and principles previously agreed by Board.
- 13 Notable in current provision are two programmes from Skills Development Scotland:
- a) Flexible Training Opportunities. This programme offers financial support to businesses across Scotland to deliver 5,000 training places this financial year. This scheme mimics aspects of the current Land Based Business training project. The distinction is in our focus on the land based sector and our openness to multiple applications from one business, the SDS scheme is open to all businesses and only available for one episode of training per business. Discussion with SDS reveals intent to apply to ESF to continue the scheme next financial year.
 - b) Modern Apprenticeships. These are available nationally across many industry sectors primarily for people aged 16-19 and offer paid employment combined with the opportunity to undertake training programmes leading to accredited qualifications over a period of 2-4 years. Training is at no cost to the employer business.

- 14 This information demonstrates that opportunity lies in ensuring that the right subject is delivered to the right audience. This is the effect of the current project, achieved by offering land based businesses financial support to address the training needs they identify. In addition to which the events we organise contribute to delivery of our priorities. This focus is only enabled by the existence of a dedicated training project with resources available for that purpose.
- 15 There is also a range of funding available for training. Mostly it is aimed at people in the 16-19 age group including programmes such as Skills seekers and part time bursaries (with limited availability to over 18s but means tested). There are schemes for older age groups including Training for Work (for those over 18 and continuously unemployed for 13 weeks). For people of any age the Individual Learning Account, for those with total income under £22k is available. This may be used to attend any training delivered by accredited suppliers.
- 16 Discussion with commercial training providers and beneficiaries of the current programme, who are constantly searching for support with their training, indicates that there is no equivalent to the Land Based Business Training Project which supports training costs. The exception to this might be the newly launched Flexible Training Opportunities programme about which knowledge in businesses is improving.
- 17 In this context the future training project must deliver against the overall objectives and the themes and principles agreed by Board. The future project must also respond to the wish of match funders that a new project shows evolution from previously funded work and be careful not to duplicate or displace work or funding already in place.
- 18 We therefore propose to offer a training project with three activities
- a) **Provision and promotion of information.**
We will maintain information on all levels of training and make it available by;
 - b) **Signposting**
We will respond to all enquiries about training by signposting available opportunities; and
 - c) **Delivery**
We propose to deliver three strands of training related work, outlined below.
- The activities a) and b) outlined above are added value possible because of the existence of a training project; it is delivery which attracts funding support to which we add the value of a) and b).
- 19 Within the delivery activity we propose three strands of activity
- a) Developing young people whilst in employment with land based businesses
 - b) Responsive support for the training of land based businesses
 - c) Pro-active delivery of training events

These three strands of work are outlined further below. During discussion required to prepare Annex 3 considerable interest in the first strand has been expressed. No

other organisation is offering anything similar and SAC in particular, enthused about the possibility for this proposal to make a difference in the land based sector. The exception is Skills Development Scotland who see the first strand as a duplication of their Modern Apprenticeship. For reasons outlined below we do not believe this to be the case.

- 20 In addition we will continue the brokering and promotion role for training / events provided by partners and (non-financial) encouragement for partners to bring events into the National Park.

Developing young people whilst in employment with land based businesses

- 21 Annex 3 shows a number of initiatives that create new opportunities for unemployed young people in the more choices more chances group (formerly known as not in employment education or training). In the Park this includes two projects supported by Cairngorms LEADER+ funding; the Cairngorms Construction Training Project and the Barnado's Works Cairngorms project.

- 22 A variety of work shows that there is a particular training need for young people in employment in the land based sector.

- a) Recent work from the Scottish Forestry Industry Cluster shows that the uptake of rural skills training by young people in Scotland has decreased in recent times and employers in the forestry sector find training costs for young people in their employment prohibitive.
- b) The HECLA/Roberts evaluation of the training project underlined the importance of providing training opportunities for young people as a key element of maintaining flourishing communities and economy in the future.
- c) Young people (16-24) are a specific group for targeted support by both CNPA and potential funders. The 2006 youth consultations for the National Park plan records "there is demand for local skills based training – ranging from land skills training through to short courses on cosmetics." This developed the statement in the earlier Cairngorms Youth National Park Manifesto of a need for "training schemes in tourism, forestry, agriculture, the environment and information technology and communications."
- d) The LANTRA "Skills Assessment for the environmental and land based sector"(October 2009) states:

The main cause attributed by employers for skill gaps amongst their employees, is a lack of experience. A lack of staff motivation, failure to train and an inability of the workforce to keep up with change are also commonly cited. These results suggest that, given time, the majority of skill gaps can be overcome by staff gaining the necessary experience within their role.

And

...jobs in the sector require a longer period of time to learn how to do them well. This indicates that jobs in the sector require skills, although many employers do not measure this in terms of formal qualifications.

This same work also stated that “61% of establishments report difficulty in recruiting staff with the required skills” demonstrating the importance of training in post for the land based sector.

- 23 In addition to research outlined, discussion with employers in the Park confirms that this is a gap that might usefully be addressed. At the moment employers often for reasons of cost, struggle to deliver training to young people in their employment. If targeted support were available, skill levels in young people resident in the Park would increase and this in turn would increase the business efficiency of businesses based in the Park. There would be additional benefits to retention and ultimately improved skill levels in the workforce in the National Park.
- 24 We propose a new initiative to allow land based businesses to access financial support specifically for the development of young people who are in their employment.
- 25 This scheme will seek application from the business which
- a) Shows the relationship of the business to the Park, either by geographic location or majority of their activity.
 - b) Is for an individual employed in the business aged 19-25 who has been working for the business at least 3 months (at time application), this period will allow the business to assess the particular development needs of employees.
 - c) Outlines a training programme that develops a young persons' skills and abilities, must involve two or more training events, must last over 6 months and can last up to one year. This will contribute to the development of a training culture in the applicant businesses.
- 26 The intervention rate will be up to 60% or £2,000 per business per year whichever is least. In return for this high intervention rate the training received by the young person must be in topics/areas that directly relate to the aims and objectives of the National Park Plan as they relate to land based businesses. So for example management and leadership training, ecology and habitat survey, monitoring and management and low carbon land management. Under these broad headings businesses may decide on the training they wish staff to attend. Whilst incentivising particular topic areas with a high intervention rate this proposal allows the business freedom to select particular courses relevant to their and their young employees needs.
- 27 This proposal brings a focussed advantage for land based businesses and young people in the Park. Additionally it may offer development potential further training for people coming out of a Modern Apprenticeship. It thus contributes to the development of a training culture in land based sector the Park.

Responsive support for the training of land based businesses

- 28 To date the majority of work of the current project has been through the mechanism of responding to requests from land based businesses for support with the costs of their training. The only eligibility criteria have been that the business is in

- or adjacent to the Park and once that is confirmed we have supported training to suit the business without restriction on subject.
- 29 This previous work has been very successful, with strong uptake and consistently good feedback from beneficiaries in praise of the flexibility and responsiveness of the scheme. Hecla/Roberts concluded the project has “been successful in generating a wide range of local impacts across the Cairngorms National Park in terms of skills and learning, networking and capacity building.”
- 30 The proposal for the new project is that we build on our success to date and whilst being aware of the funders wish for the project to evolve, we continue to offer responsive support for training.
- 31 The evolutions we propose are
- a) A cap on our support of £2,000 per business per year
 - b) Withdrawal as outlined in the January 2010 (para 14) Board paper, from financial support for training that does not make a clear contribution to strategic objectives and actions in the current and future Park Plans including for example Information and Communication Technologies , administration and first aid.
 - c) Differential intervention rates to incentivise training specific to the Park (outlined below)
- 32 To date our intervention rate of support for costs has been either 45% or 50% depending on where the applicant business is located in the Park. Going forward it is proposed in this strand of the project to offer two levels of intervention rate dependant on the potential of the training to contribute to collective achievement of the National Park Plan.
- a) Lower rate, 25%. For training that does not directly offer opportunity to enhance land management in the Park for example technical courses such as trailer driving, machinery use or national governing body qualifications for the outdoor education sector. This is a reduction in our support but does make a significant contribution toward costs and enables us to maximise our support across the largest number of businesses. Discussion with current beneficiaries suggests that such a reduction would not cause significant difficulty, to paraphrase several: any support is welcome.
 - b) Higher rate, 40%. For training in topic areas such as management and leadership training, ecology and habitat survey, monitoring and management and low carbon land management. Again the intent here is to incentivise training most directly related to land management in the Park, but as the training need is not so great in those over 25 years old we propose a maximum 40% intervention rate.

Pro-active delivery of training events

- 33 The Cairngorms National Park has specific management requirements that need bespoke events that support peer group learning and development. Over the history of the project this has included a programme of events related to renewable energy and more recently events on hill tracks and offering continuing professional development to outdoor professionals working in the Park. Through this mechanism we develop creative solutions to management issues in the National Park and enable businesses to contribute to achievement of 25 year outcomes in the National Park Plan. These outcomes are only possible due to the existence of a training project whose resources are dedicated to this purpose.
- 34 For the future we propose to offer up to 20 day long events per year focussed on subjects and areas that directly relate to the achievement of the aims of the Park as they appear in the current and forthcoming National Park Plans and the table of training themes shown in Annex 2. Specific events will be focussed on specific audiences for example, changes to the snaring regulation for gamekeepers, understanding the planning system for community groups, or micro-renewables for householders.

Summary of proposed delivery

- 35 Strand 1: Developing young people whilst in employment with land based businesses. Offering financial support to land based businesses to provide training for young people in their employment for at least 2 training events in a period of less than one year. The strand will have a high intervention rate to incentivise training in topic areas directly related to land management in the Park that are not available through alternative schemes.
- 36 Strand 2: Responsive support for training. Responding to requests from land based businesses for financial support for training. Evolving from our current work with two intervention rates a lower rate, 25% for topic areas that support businesses in the land based sector and a higher rate, 40% for topic areas that directly relate to land management in the Park.
- 37 Strand 3: Pro-active delivery of training. Delivery of training events focussed on the aims of the Park as they appear in the current and forthcoming National Park Plans and the themes and audiences agreed by Board, Annex 2.
- 38 We believe this proposal along with the information provision and sign posting activities outlined above are together a constructive and unique addition to the training landscape in the National Park responding to the specific needs of the National Park and with the potential to contribute to delivery of the National Park Plan.

Sizing the Project

- 39 Finance Committee have agreed in principle for £80k per year for each of the next 3 years. The below table suggests initial allocations against each of the strands of work. Within European Social Fund conditions these allocations can be flexible allowing us to respond to actual demand and uptake.

	Initial Allocation	Annual beneficiaries
Marketing	£8k	
Strand 1, young people	£25k	20
Strand 2, responsive*	£53k	
@ 25% intervention	½ of £53k : £26.5k	279
@ 40% intervention	½ of £53k : £26.5k	175
Strand 3, proactive, 20 events of 20 people at 75% fill rate	£18k	300
Total beneficiaries, all strands		774
Total annual spend, includes salary and other project costs	£163k	

*Beneficiary numbers for strand 2 responsive, are based on our current average spend per supported place which is ~£190.

Conclusion

- 40 The current funding package for the successful LBBT/CAP project is ending. We wish to build on the success of the past and deliver a new training role closely aligned to current and emerging priorities in the National Park Plan. Together the three strands amount to a relatively significant evolution from the current project. This evolution strengthens our application for match funding; funders prefer to see existing projects evolve, rather than fund a continuation.

Recommendation

- 41 **That the Board**
- Endorses the three strands of the training project outlined above.**
 - Approves £80k per year for each of the next three years to deliver the training project described.**
 - Remit to Management Team authority to agree detailed design of the project.**

Delivering Sustainability

- 42 Training can significantly enhance moves towards sustainability. The training themes in Annex 2 focus very much on offering sustainable solutions to audiences that can make the most impact on the environment (e.g. land managers, local businesses and residents). Focusing on business development supports the aspiration for a vibrant, sustainable economy sensitive to the unique qualities of the National Park

Delivering a Park for All

- 43 It is important to ensure that barriers to training are removed where possible. The CNPA has a commitment to provide training in accessible venues and to cater for specific attendee requirements.

Delivering Economy, Effectiveness and Efficiency

- 44 Focusing on a narrower range of training opportunities in more depth, to a more focussed range of audiences should deliver more impact in the long term. There will also be a closer working relationship with public sector and other training providers.

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Implications

Financial Implications

- 45 Finance Committee has approved in principle £80k per year for each of the next three years. The project proposed above brings no further financial implications. The project is currently delivered by 1.6FTE officers; a full time project manager (CNPA Band 3) and a 0.6FTE project support officer (CNPA Band 5).

Presentational Implications

- 46 Some concern has been expressed over “raised expectations” in relation to training support across the Park and there is a need to manage this in a way that does not lessen the impact of the achievements generated to this point by the previous success of the training projects. Good communications about changes in provision with existing beneficiaries of the projects, particularly land managers is essential.

Next steps

- 47 The next steps are:
- a) We are investigating alternative sources of funding in the eventuality that the application to European Social Fund fails, any applications may require changes in emphasis to the proposed project.
 - b) Once resources to take the project forward are secure, the detail of project design will be worked up. This will include design of paperwork, preparation of marketing material and ensuring web space is available as a repository of training materials. This will ensure the project can be launched as effectively and as early as possible.
 - c) During the course of the project we will maintain a rigorous programme of monitoring of both spend and beneficiary numbers. In addition to the quarterly returns and desk checks required by European Social Fund. We also propose to return to Board annually with an information paper on progress with the project
 - d) As part of the project we will convene an occasional meeting of organisations and people with an interest in training to discuss the future of training in the National Park. And if there is agreement of likely need beyond 2013, investigate ways and means by which that need might be met, this might include other structures for future delivery possibly a trust or social enterprise structure.

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Annex I. Guiding principles

- I. In developing the project proposals it would also be useful for the Board to agree a number of guiding principles that will be used to shape the development of future proposals. The following principles have been developed on the basis of the Hecla/ Roberts Report and on discussions with staff, some Board members and external agencies:
 - a) CNPA should focus on adding value to the training activity provided by others linking it more clearly to the priorities for action within the Park Plan and the special management needs of the National Park;
 - b) CNPA's role should generally focus on acting as a broker for training, bringing together appropriate expertise and beneficiaries and signposting and promoting training events delivered by others (that contribute to the aims of the National Park) rather than trying to provide training directly.
 - c) Where there is a gap existing provision (particularly in the identified themes) CNPA should take a proactive lead role in ensuring the appropriate skills development and training is delivered.
 - d) There should continue to be significant emphasis in the development of skills and learning on the needs of the land-based businesses in the Park.
 - e) CNPA should take steps to develop more effective relationships with public sector agencies involved in training provision: to make best use of resources, minimise duplication and identify gaps in the skills market more effectively.
 - f) CNPA should ensure all training is readily available to the groups that can make most impact in delivering actions within the Park Plan, and that proper support measures are put in place to minimise any barriers to uptake (timing, childcare, location, etc.)
 - g) CNPA should try to ensure that all training taking place in the National Park is placed in the context of the National Park and that opportunities to deliver key messages about the significance of the Park are highlighted.
 - h) Training events should be designed to maximise other more intangible benefits that have proved invaluable in the past: (e.g. networking opportunities, bringing diverse and sometimes conflicting groups together to work on specific challenges, creating ambassadors for the National Park, etc.).