



National Standards for Community Engagement

The National Standards for Community Engagement were developed and published by Communities Scotland (as was) on behalf of the Scottish Executive as a central feature of the Community Planning Act 2003. For detail of the standards you can refer to <http://www.scdc.org.uk/national-standards-community-engagement/>

These seek to promote good practice in community engagement and are widely referred to by Community Planning Partnerships.

In 2006 it was decided that the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) should explore the use of the National Standards to guide its own approaches to community engagement.

Comment was sought from community representatives and from the two community liaison officers who were working for the CNPA at that point as to how appropriate the Standards were for the Cairngorms National Park context. The feedback suggested that the guidance was rather prescriptive and rigid and that, if it was followed to the letter, would be more resource intensive than most organisations could deal with.

Subsequently, a more user-friendly version of the National Standards was drawn up still reflecting all the elements of the original standards and was used to guide two important pieces of consultation work – the pilot community needs assessments in Grantown-on-Spey, Dulnain Bridge, Cromdale and Advie, and the Core Paths Plan consultation (2007/2008).

Having reviewed how well the locally tailored standards have worked, it is felt that they are appropriate for adoption by the Park Authority and:

- a) CNPA staff understand and follow the Standards, taking into consideration the balance between best practice and best value; and
- b) The Standards are promoted externally as appropriate, so that there is an understanding of what people can expect in relation to our community engagement activities.

The standards were endorsed by the CNPA board on 5 September 2008.

Cairngorms National Park Authority Community Engagement Standards

1. The Involvement Standard

- a) We will work with our communities to identify what their interests and priorities are to ensure our plans reflect their needs.
- b) Those with an interest in the issue/s for consultation will be identified and made aware of a variety of opportunities for participation.

2. The Planning Standard

- a) The purpose and outcome of the engagement process will be made clear to participants focusing on how this might impact on their interests (What's in it for them?) and participants will be involved in agreeing the issues, scope, timescale, actions and resources/support involved.

3. The Support Standard and Methods Standard

- a) Mechanisms, roles and responsibilities shall be agreed with the participants/representatives of the community and must be as inclusive as possible with any identified barriers/constraints removed or minimised.

4. The Working Together Standard and Sharing Information Standard

- a) Clear procedures, support and investment that enable participants to communicate, share information and work effectively together will be put in place (in partnership with others if at all possible) as required, for example capacity building, training, facilitation, etc.

5. The Working with others Standard & Improvement Standard

- a) We will work with other public bodies to co-ordinate our community engagement activities, share resources and learn from each other to continually improve how we collectively engage with communities.

6. The Feedback Standard

- a) We will provide timely feedback to the community highlighting the results of the engagement, what changes/influence the engagement has had and the rationale for decisions made and for what could happen next.

7. The Monitoring and Evaluation Standard

- a) We will monitor whether the engagement achieves its purpose and evaluate how the process could be improved for future participation. Feedback and comments about the process itself from participants should be encouraged. Some data must be analysed and reported in the same format each time to allow real comparisons to be made.