

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: SCOTLAND RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
(SRDP)

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Purpose

To update the Board on the SRDP and to inform the Board of continuing work on the Priority for Action on Integrating Public Support for Land Management

Recommendations

- a) That the Board note the update on SRDP
- b) That the Board note the work on SRDP contributing to NPP Priority for Action 6.2

Executive Summary

This paper gives an update on the progress in the development of the Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP), with details on funding, outcomes and the development of Regional Priorities through the Regional Proposal Assessment Committees (RPACs). It also details how the CNPA have been working with partners through membership of the rPACs and the convening of an Interim Delivery team for Priority for Action on Integrating Public Support for Land Management to ensure that the actions within the National Park Plan are reflected in these priority Statements. The need for support to land managers as this programme is established is highlighted and this is dealt with in more detail by Paper 2. The paper also recognising the need to integrate the delivery of the LEADER programme with the Rural Development Contracts within the National Park

SCOTLAND RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (SRDP) – FOR INFORMATION

Background

1. The Theme 2 Board paper submitted in August gave an update at that time on the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP). Since then the plans for the implementation of the programme have advanced. The Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate (SGRPID- formerly SEERAD) implementation team in Edinburgh have been developing this process in conjunction with the regional RPID offices, SNH, and FCS as well as other Regional Proposal Assessment Committee (rPAC) members. The CNPA have been engaging with this process through direct contact with the implementation team through the Key Contacts group; membership of the wider rPAC; and through the interim Delivery Team for Priority for Action Integrating Public Support for Land Management.

Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP)

2. At the time of writing the SRDP is awaiting consideration by the EU Rural Development Committee and it is expected that this will take place at the January meeting. Following that the Scottish Government will make provision for delivery and then the programme is expected to be launched in late February/early March. These dates are provisional as they are dependent on the approval by the EU.
3. The SRDP will replace many public funding schemes for land management such as the Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme, the Rural Stewardship Scheme. A small number of schemes will remain; (Processing and Marketing, Crofting Counties Scheme, Forestry Challenge Fund and Training Schemes) but the majority of funds through the programme will be delivered through the following mechanisms:
 - a) Less favoured Support Schemes (LFASS)
 - b) LEADER
 - c) Rural Development Contracts – Land Manager Options (RDC – LMOs) – formerly Tier 2
 - d) Rural Development Contracts – Rural Priorities (RDC – RPs) – formerly Tier 3
4. The programme is very different to the previous schemes and its emphasis is on an integrated approach delivering environmental, social & economic outcomes. The key points and differences in the new programmes are:
 - a) Prominence on buying benefits for the Scottish People
 - b) Strong focus on outcomes and a greater emphasis on rural development
 - c) A wider range of potential beneficiaries – land managers, rural businesses and communities
 - d) Integrated application and delivery process through public bodies working together
 - e) A competitive scheme; Rural Development Contracts – Rural Priorities, available to those able to deliver best contribution to outcomes

- f) A regional approach to delivery, targeted benefits contributing to regional priorities

The funding allocations are shown in Annex 1

5. Regional priorities for the assessment of proposals under Rural Development Contracts – Rural Priorities are being developed by ‘smartening’ a list of 32 national priorities. These regional Priorities are currently in preparation by the regional Proposal Assessment Committees (rPACs) for the 11 ‘On the Ground’ regions of Scotland (see Annex 2). This process involved meetings of the wider rPACs and stakeholder consultation during November and the final lists will be submitted to the Cabinet Secretary for approval in mid January. The CNPA has a place on the wider rPAC for each of the three regions covering the National Park in the role of developing the Regional Priorities.
6. The proposals submitted by applicants under the RDC – RPs will be assessed initially by case officers in the three core agencies (SGRPID/SNH/FCS) and approved by the core rPACs against three main criteria; fit with regional priorities, Value for Money and Risk.

The Core membership of the rPACs is:

- a) SGRPID
- b) SNH
- c) FCS
- d) SEPA
- e) Scottish Enterprise or local authorities

CNPA and Partners in Delivery of SRDP and Priority for Action 6.2

7. As previously mentioned in the Theme 2 Board paper submitted in August, it was an early priority to consider priority public benefits for the National Park in time to feed into the developing implementation of the SRDP. The SRDP implementation process involves the regionalisation of national priorities as mentioned above, and these will act as a basis for assessment of applications under Tier 3 of the SRDP – Rural Development Contracts – Rural Priorities.
8. Given the crucial timing of the priority setting process, it was thought prudent to convene an interim membership of the Delivery Team for this Priority for Action comprising the core members of the three RPACs that cover the National Park. This meeting was held in September along with a briefing for Board members from the central implementation team at Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate (SGRPID).
9. The aim of this meeting was to discuss and agree a consistent approach across the three rPACS and to ensure that NPP priorities are reflected in the development regional priorities for the three areas. This was considered a pragmatic and workable resolution to the issue of fragmentation.

10. This meeting was held on 14th September and agreed the following points:
 - a) There is a need for consistency in approach when considering applications for SRPD support from the Park across the three RPACs
 - b) Regional priorities should be drawn from existing strategies and plans which will include the National Park Plan
 - c) Regional Priorities must be clearly linked to the National priorities which are expected to be based on the Strategic Plan Outcomes
 - d) Regional priorities must not conflict with National Park Plan priorities so they must be checked for alignment
11. The next meeting of the Delivery Team for this Priority for Action will take place in early 2008. This will have a wider membership to include other stakeholders and so provide a mechanism to consider and review the public benefits priorities that SRDP may deliver as well as focussing on the other actions, in particular looking at landscape scale targeting for support and developing an exemplary approach to sustainable land management.

Communications and Support

12. It is felt that given the newness of this programme and the change in emphasis and application process, that programme of support and communication will be vital to ensure that land managers in the National Park are in the best position to make the most of the programme and to deliver its outcomes and those in the National Park Plan.
13. Paper 2 details how we aim to provide pre-application support, piloting an approach within the Cairngorms National Park that will provide an 'outreach' service to ensure that land managers know what support is available and how to get it. This will also integrate with LEADER and help to initiate high quality applications that will deliver key actions within the SRDP and National Park Plan. Annex 3 shows a chart on how this might work and more detail is provided in Paper 2.

New LEADER and Integration with Rural Development Contracts – Rural Priorities

14. As part of the process of implementation of the SRDP within the National Park to deliver NPP actions, we intend to develop a strong coordination between New LEADER and Rural Development Contracts as the New LEADER Partnership will incorporate the many interests of the Land Based sector.
15. The main priority for LEADER under Axis IV of the European Commission Rural Development Regulation is to increase the capacity of local rural communities and business networks to build community capacity, innovate and co-operate in order to tackle local development objectives. A new element of the New LEADER Programme is that it can now support land based businesses.

16. The New Cairngorms LEADER Business Plan was submitted in November 2007 to the Scottish Government and the Partnership themes are:
 - a) Revitalising Communities
 - b) A Progressive Rural Economy£2.2m was applied for from a Scottish allocation of £42m
17. Programme actions will be aligned with the Cairngorms National Park strategy, recently developed and agreed through an extensive Programme of community consultation. The Community Planning Process will further inform Programme actions by identifying issues and solutions at a local level.
18. Actions under the **Revitalising Communities** theme will strengthen and develop the support structures for rural communities, with a particular focus on building community capacity for action, working with the environment and supporting improved communications, better services and personal development.
19. Actions under the **Progressive Rural Economy** will support the development of a diversified and competitive rural economy in the Cairngorms National Park, including the economic development of community enterprises and community-owned assets, the exploitation of Information and Communication Technologies, developing the area's business base, and improving marketing for community enterprises and micro-businesses.
20. LEADER representatives have met with the area RPACs and it has been agreed that a communication network between the various groups will be essential. Following approval of funds, a series of awareness raising sessions involving both RPACs and LEADER will be required in order to provide as much information and clarity for communities as possible.

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Annex 1 – Detail on Scotland Rural Development Programme

1) The SRDP holds £1.6 billion of funding and the key outcomes are:

- a) Business Viability (minimum 10% spend)
- b) Environmental Improvements (minimum 25% spend)
 - i) Water
 - ii) Climate Change
 - iii) Landscape and Biodiversity
- c) Thriving rural communities (minimum 10% spend)

2) The funding is comprised of:

- a) Scottish Government funds £1,113m (71%)
- b) National Modulation £227m (14%)
- c) Compulsory Modulation £104m (7%)
- d) EU EAFRD £125m (8%)

3) The funding allocations through the programme are as follows:

- a) RDCs £596 million (36%)
- b) LFASS £427 million (26%)
- c) Legacy Schemes* £338 million (20%)
- d) Other schemes** £301 million (18%)

* these are payments under existing agreements (SFGS, RSS etc.)

**these are the remaining schemes mentioned in para 10

Map of the 11 On the Ground Regions



