

CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

Title: Ranger Services in Cairngorms National Park

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Purpose: To update the Forum on the role of Rangers Service and highlight the Ranger Framework Review.

Advice Sought

The Forum is invited to:-

- a) Note the work currently being done by Ranger Services and:
- b) Consider how they may wish to feed into the Ranger Framework Review.

Background

1. Cairngorms National Park Authority does not employ a ranger service directly but provides grant aid to most services and works with all services to develop a coordinated approach across the National Park. In this respect we are unique among UK National Park Authorities.
2. There are currently 13 ranger services operating in the National Park, 9 of which receive funding from the CNPA, 2 receive funding directly from SNH and one receives no public funding. The majority of these services were in existence prior to designation of the National Park. Each service is managed and funded by a range of partners including local authorities, private estates and NGO's. Table 1 below gives a breakdown of services operating in Cairngorms National Park.
3. The existing services cover the whole of the National Park although presence in the central montane area is limited. That said, services are generally located where there is the greatest need.

Table 1 Rangers Services in CNP

Ranger Service	No of Rangers	Funding
Highland Council	2	Highland Council & CNPA Grant
Angus Council	2	Angus Council & CNPA Grant
Aberdeenshire Council	1	Aberdeenshire Council and CNPA Grant
RSPB	1	RSPB & CNPA Grant
Rothiemurchus Estate	2	Rothiemurchus Estate & CNPA Grant
Glenlivet Estate	1.4	Crown Estate & CNPA Grant
Glen Tanar Charitable Trust	1.6	GTCT & CNPA Grant
Balmoral Estate	2.6	Balmoral Estate & CNPA Grant
Atholl Estate	2.25	Atholl Estate & CNPA Grant
Forestry Commission Scotland	1.1	FCS
Mar Lodge, National Trust for Scotland	1.5	NTS & SNH through a national concordat
Killiecrankie, National Trust for Scotland	2	NTS & SNH through a national concordat
Cairngorm Mountain	1.9	Natural Retreats
	22.3	

4. In 2012 the CNPA Board agreed a *Partnership Framework for Ranger Services in the Park* (see Annex 1) which sets out the vision for Ranger Services:

A high profile network of Cairngorms' rangers connecting people with an outstanding National Park. They work collaboratively to provide an innovative, inspirational and professional service. They are committed to enhancing public enjoyment, understanding and care of the outdoors, focused on maintaining the quality and relevance of their work and recognised, valued and supported by their employers, other related professions and the public.

Future Role of Rangers in CNP

5. We consider the following reasons for looking afresh at how the CNPA supports Ranger Services:-
 - a) The current distribution of services pre-dates the National Park and was not established specifically to meet the needs of a National Park. The current arrangement was 'inherited' and has been virtually static for over a decade.
 - b) Since last looking at the role of Ranger Services (see Annex 2) we have agreed a number of new strategies which require their support for delivery:
 - i. Cairngorms Nature
 - ii. Active Cairngorms
 - iii. Capercaillie Framework
 - c) Public sector funding is declining and we are already seeing some reduction in funding support for rangers.
 - d) Significant areas of highly designated and highly visited land are changing management: CairnGorm Mountain, Upper Rothiemurchus and potentially The Crown Estate. Equally significant areas have no ranger presence.
 - e) Residents and visitor numbers are increasing each year, and recreational patterns are changing: it is likely that the distribution of rangers set over a decade ago does not meet current needs.
 - f) The need to safeguard protected species, and particularly Capercaillie, is becoming increasingly important. Again, it is likely that the distribution of rangers set over a decade ago does not meet current conservation needs.
 - g) With nearly two thirds of rangers employed on specific sites (estates or similar management units) the current system lacks flexibility to redeploy resources to priority areas at priority times.
6. This review is about looking at what the National Park and its visitors and residents need, alongside the needs of employers and determining if there are ways to direct our support to further improve the effectiveness of the network of Ranger Services.
7. To date we have held a series of structured discussions with partners which has helped us develop thinking further. We intended to take a paper to the Board in December 2015 with a review of options and recommendations for any change.

Annex I

A Partnership Framework for Rangers Services in the Cairngorms National Park

Introduction

1. Ranger Services in the Cairngorms National Park are provided in a unique and highly successful partnership arrangement by 12 different employers, including Local Authorities, Private Estates, Charitable Trusts, Public Agencies and one Community Group. Their work is vital to the successful management of the National Park and to meet the vision for the Park as set out in the National Park Plan.
2. All 12 services receive support from public funds with nine services in receipt of a specific grant for Ranger Services from the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA). The Park Authority works to coordinate the work of all the Ranger Services in the Park. The role and work of Rangers in Scotland is set out in the 2008 SNH publication 'Rangers in Scotland' and this framework is developed from that national policy.
3. This Partnership Framework sets out for the Cairngorms National Park:-
 - a) The role and aims of Ranger Services.
 - b) A Vision for Ranger Services.
 - c) Opportunities to be developed in the next 5 years.
 - d) The role of Ranger employers seeking support from CNPA.
 - e) The role of Ranger Services in delivering the Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012-17.
 - f) The role of the CNPA in coordinating Ranger Services in the National Park.
 - g) Grant Application Process.
 - h) Monitoring and Review.
4. This framework will form the basis for agreeing grant applications made annually by employers to the CNPA, and form the basis for coordination work with the three services that do not claim grant. The framework covers the period 2012-17.

Role and Aims of Ranger

5. Nationally, the overall purpose of Rangers is to connect people with places. Rangers should have strong people-skills, be knowledgeable about the natural and cultural heritage and be committed to increasing enjoyment, understanding and care of these resources by and for the public.

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6. ***Rangers promote the enjoyment, understanding and care of Scotland's outdoors through: the first-hand provision of information, advice and activities; interpretation; the management of sites and facilities; and seeking to secure responsible behaviour.***
7. The National Ranger Aims are:-
 - a) ***To ensure a warm welcome and provide support to help people enjoy the outdoors.***
 - b) ***To increase awareness, understanding, care and responsible use of the natural and cultural heritage.***
 - c) ***To support the sustainable management and use of the outdoors to meet a range of social, economic and environmental objectives.***
8. All Ranger Services in the National Park should work to achieve each of these aims, though the balance between them may vary from service to service. In some organisations, other staff may lead on or contribute towards one or more of them. But it is the Ranger Service which has the lead role in delivering these aims collectively through first-hand provision for the public in the outdoors.

A Vision for Ranger Services in the Cairngorms National Park

9. In a unique partnership arrangement there are 12 Ranger Services delivering the aims of their employers and working in partnership to deliver the aims of the National Park. In order to get the most from this partnership for employers, land managers, visitors, communities, and businesses we feel it is useful to have a common vision:-

A high profile network of Cairngorms' rangers connecting people with an outstanding National Park. They work collaboratively to provide an innovative, inspirational and professional service. They are committed to enhancing public enjoyment, understanding and care of the outdoors, focused on maintaining the quality and relevance of their work and recognised, valued and supported by their employers, other related professions and the public.

10. In meeting this vision it is essential that the role of the employer is recognised and local needs are delivered, and that the customer also sees rangers as professional sources of information about the National Park.

Opportunities to be developed in the next 5 years

11. During the development of both the Sustainable Tourism Strategy and the draft National Park Plan 2012 to 2017 CNPA identified five areas of Ranger work that should be enhanced. In agreeing this partnership framework CNPA are committed to supporting Ranger Services in these five areas (all five are recognised in Section 6 & Table 1 as activities requiring CNPA support and in the Vision). The attributes and opportunities are as follows:

a. Rangers with high public profile – welcoming and accessible to visitors and communities, and well promoted.

Rangers have a key role in supporting sustainable **economic development** by maintaining, managing and promoting infrastructure for tourism (see Rangers in Scotland). Cairngorms Business Partnership and a range of partners will continue to develop the Cairngorms National Park as a tourism destination throughout the next five years. Rangers have a key role to play in allowing visitors to enjoy outstanding experiences.

b. Rangers more closely linked to the National Park and using CNP brand identity more frequently and consistently.

The National Park is becoming increasingly important to visitors with over half the visitors to area saying that the designation was 'important or very important' in their choice of destination (CNP Visitor 2009/10). The CNP brand is also becoming increasingly used and understood. Visibly linking the work of Ranger Services to the National Park will encourage the public to see staff as credible and reliable sources of information about the area that they have chosen to visit.

c. Increased opportunities for professional development – through for example, increased uptake of SCRA Ranger Award

SNH supports the continued development of a committed, competent and skilled Ranger workforce, and the creation of a national training and development plan to achieve the cost effective delivery of agreed skills and competencies for Rangers (Rangers in Scotland). SNH, SCRA and a range of partners, including CNPA, will launch the Scottish Ranger Award training and development programme in 2012. Support for Rangers in CNP to undertake this award will lead to a more competent provision of Ranger Services.

d. Rangers supporting opportunities for people to connect with CNP – through education, promotion of good health and active volunteering.

'Rangers in Scotland' recognises the role that Rangers can play increasing **health and well-being** through facilitating access to and promoting enjoyment and understanding of the outdoors, and in encouraging people to be **active citizens** by helping to build stronger and safer communities and providing opportunities for volunteering, locally or further afield. The second National Park Plan equally supports further work in outdoor learning through the Curriculum for Excellence, health through 'Active

Cairngorms' and volunteering. As nationally, the overall purpose of Rangers is to connect people with places and they have a key role to support these three areas of work.

e. *More sharing of best practice and collaborative working between ranger services and others who work with visitors and communities.*

'Rangers in Scotland' recommends contact and close working with other Ranger Services and relevant organisations within or close to the area. The Cairngorms National Park is a large area with many common opportunities and challenges. Many of the Ranger Services, although part of larger organisations, are small in number. There are clear benefits to greater collaboration both between Ranger services and other staff providing similar services.

The Role of Ranger Employers

12. The provision of Ranger Services in the Cairngorms National Park is unique in Britain. Unlike any other National Park, Ranger Services are provided by 12 employers and not the National Park Authority. This arrangement allows local delivery of Ranger Services by staff that are fully aware of local opportunities and sensitivities. It supports Ranger staff that work alongside other employees who, working together, can collectively meet the needs of their employer.
13. These employers fund and directly manage their Rangers. It is the responsibility of the Ranger employer to provide adequate management support for Ranger staff, including regular line management, supervision and review.
14. National policy states that the most successful Ranger Services result where there is:
 - a) A clearly defined and well understood role for Rangers within the employing organisation's overall strategy/service delivery plan.
 - b) Good leadership of the service and continuity in staffing.
 - c) Effective work planning and management systems in place.
 - d) Adequate budget support for revenue and capital costs.
 - e) Support for continuing professional development of staff including appropriate training.
 - f) Access to relevant support either within the wider employer's organisation or contracted in.
 - g) Contact and close working with other Ranger Services and relevant organisations within or close to the area.
15. Ranger employers' apply to CNPA for a discretionary grant that, if approved is based on an agreed annual work programme that helps to deliver the National Park Plan.

16. It is fundamental to the partnership that ranger services deliver outputs that both meet the needs of their employers and deliver the National Park Plan.
17. The Ranger grant is offered to support agreed public benefits derived from the work of each service. Details of the full grant conditions are contained in CNPA Operational and Grant Application Guidance for Ranger Services.
18. CNPA will also use this framework with the three publically funded Ranger Services that do not receive direct grant to encourage collaborative working and delivery of the National Park Plan.

Role of Rangers in Delivering the Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012-17

19. In the Cairngorms National Park public support for Rangers through grant aid is targeted at delivering the National Park Plan. Annex I shows the priorities for work in the next National Park Plan matched to the national ranger aims. Most of these outputs are work that is also a direct benefit to the employer.
20. Once again all services should aim to deliver outputs across the three aims but the balance may vary from service to service depending on the needs of the employer. These outputs should be seen as a 'menu' rather than a list of actions that all need to be delivered. Discussions over the annual work programmes will agree specific outputs with each employer. The impact of the ranger grant will be assessed by measuring agreed outputs that meet the needs of National Park Plan Reporting and SNH Ranger Reporting.

The role of the CNPA in Coordinating Ranger Services in the National Park

21. Table I below shows the key areas of work that CNPA will deliver to coordinate, promote and enhance the role of Rangers in the National Park.

Table 1: Key Areas of Work required 2012-17

What work is needed?	CNPA Contribution	Outcome
<p>1. Coordinated use of public funds to deliver the Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012-17</p>	<p>Grant aid for 9 Ranger Services directly linking their annual work programmes to delivering National Park Plan. Support to coordinate 3 other publically funded services.</p> <p>Promote the delivery of the National Park Plan by the three services not receiving CNP Ranger Grant.</p> <p>Support, training, networking and tools to enhance delivery in key area e.g. Curriculum for Excellence, coordination of volunteering and promotion of responsible access.</p> <p>Provision of additional support for services that deliver agreed outputs in the National Park Plan that require addition resources (e.g. upgrades to visitor information and interpretation)</p>	<p>1.1 Delivery of key outputs in National Park Plan (including Sustainable Tourism Strategy, Outdoor Access Strategy and Local Biodiversity Action Plan)</p>
<p>2. Continued development of a the network of Ranger Services in the Cairngorms</p>	<p>Organisation of annual Ranger gathering</p> <p>Regular communications and sharing of best practice with services and further development of a Cairngorms Ranger intranet</p> <p>Continued coordination and promotion of a CNP countryside events programme</p> <p>Continued support for services using the CNP brand identity</p> <p>Biennial meeting of Ranger Service employers and provision of regular updates.</p>	<p>2.1 A more informed, more collaborative network of Cairngorms' Ranger Services.</p> <p>2.2 A visible and accessible network clearly linked to the National Park</p> <p>2.3 Effective planning and management arrangements in place.</p>
<p>3. Continued development of a committed competent and skilled workforce</p>	<p>Support for training and professional development using the framework provided by the Scottish Countryside Ranger Award</p>	<p>3.1 Better targeted training and improved professionalism</p>

<p>4. Better local and National Promotion of the benefits of ranger services</p>	<p>Delivery of advocacy and promotion at a regional and national level. Specific role in represented the Cairngorms network at Scottish Rangers Regional Development Partnership. Liaison with SNH on National policy. Promotion of the work of Cairngorms network locally and nationally using the national reporting framework and National Park Plan reporting. Support for individual services developing publicity and promotion.</p>	<p>4.1 Better understanding by visitors, communities and politicians of the role played in managing the National Park by Ranger Services. 4.2 Greater support locally and nationally for Ranger Services.</p>
<p>5. Greater recognition of the value and important contribution made by employers</p>	<p>Agreed programmes of works that deliver both the employers needs and the National Park Plan Publicity and promotion for Ranger Services that recognises the vital contribution made by employers</p>	<p>5.1 Delivery of key outputs for employers. 5.2 Better understanding by visitors, communities and politicians of the role played in managing the National Park by Ranger employers.</p>

Grant Application Process

22. Full details of the Ranger Grant application process are contained in CNPA Operational and Grant Application Guidance for Ranger Services. Table 2 sets out, in brief, the cycle of grant application.

Table 2 the Cycle of Work in Applying for Ranger Grant 2012-15

Before the grant period has started	Yearly cycle of grant period
<p><u>By 1 February 2012</u>– Employers apply for ranger grant for period 2012-15 with a draft Annual Work Programme for 2012/13</p>	
<p><u>By 1 April 2012</u> – Finalise the Annual Work Programme plus CNP and National Reporting outputs CNPA confirm Grant for 2012/13 in detail and in principle for 2012-15.</p>	
	<p>At intervals specified in grant offer (usually 1st October and 1st March) – submit Grant Claims supported by and update of the Annual Work Programme</p>
	<p><u>By 1 February</u> - submit draft Annual Work Programme for next year; Agree and finalise Work Programme <u>by 1 April</u></p>
	<p><u>By 1 May</u> of each year within the grant period – submit CNP & National Monitoring report for the reporting year just ended</p>

Monitoring and Review

23. This framework covers the period of the National Park Plan 2012-17.
24. Outputs from grant aided ranger services will be monitored six monthly as part of the on-going review of annual work programmes.
25. Grant aided Ranger Services will complete national reporting annually and CNPA will encourage all ranger services to report using the same format. CNPA will forward all national reporting to SNH and compile an aggregate report for the National Park.
26. CNPA will use relevant Ranger Service outputs as part of the on-going monitoring of the National Park Plan (Sustainable Tourism Strategy, Outdoor Access Strategy and Local Biodiversity Action Plan).
27. Outputs will be used, as appropriate, to promote the positive work of Ranger Services and Ranger employers.
28. CNPA and Ranger employers will maintain a regular dialogue and will meet biennially to discuss the partnership.
29. CNPA will formally review the partnership at midterm review of the National Park Plan in 2015 and again in 2017.

Cairngorms National Park Authority
January 2012

Annex 2: The role of Ranger Services in delivering the next National Park Plan

Draft National Park Plan Outcome	National Ranger Aims		
	<i>To ensure a warm welcome and provide support for people to enjoy the outdoors</i>	<i>To increase awareness, understanding, care and responsible use of the natural and cultural heritage</i>	<i>To support the sustainable management and use of the outdoors to meet a range of social, economic and environmental objectives</i>
<p><i>1. More people will learn about, enjoy, and help to conserve and enhance the special, natural and cultural qualities of the Park.(Deliver Sustainable Tourism Strategy)</i></p>	<p>Maintain a wider set of information points at key sites and in communities Work with communities, land managers and other stakeholders to promote responsible access opportunities Clarify and facilitate opportunities for safe enjoyment of the mountains Promote the Cairngorms National Park Brand and brand values.</p>	<p>Further develop the role of rangers in information and interpretation Strengthen opportunities to experience local cultural heritage Provide guidance to visitors on responsible access Address adverse impacts from wild camping Coordinate and promote a full programme of countryside events Expand volunteering opportunities for all that conserve and enhance the Park's special qualities. Develop National Park learning resource materials for formal and informal education,</p>	<p>Develop and implement visitor management plans, based on evidence, that promote outstanding experiences and protect and enhance the environment. Maintain a good range of access routes based on popular paths Maintain a programme of regular visitor feedback and surveys</p>

		outdoor learning and business	
2. <i>The quality and connectivity of habitats will have improved, enhancing the landscape at a Park scale. (Deliver the Local Biodiversity Action Plan)</i>		Raise awareness and understanding of the special habitats of the Cairngorms, the work to enhance, expand and connect these habitats and role of land management in improving these habitats.	
3. <i>The species for which the Cairngorms National Park is most important will be in better conservation status in the Park. (Deliver the Local Biodiversity Action Plan)</i>		Raise awareness and understanding of the benefits of special management for rare and threatened CNP species	Support the delivery of relevant parts of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. Provide support and support for land managers to deliver conservation Participate in the Wildlife crime reduction partnership Participate in an invasive non-native species programme, reducing the spread and removing the source of invasive non-native species
4. <i>The Park's recreation opportunities will have improved the health and enjoyment of residents and visitors. (Deliver the Outdoor Access Strategy)</i>	Manage, maintain and promote core and promoted paths	Support an 'Active Cairngorms' project to increase the health of residents and visitors linking public health with exercise and the recreation opportunities in the CNP	Manage, maintain and promote core and promoted paths.

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Paper 1 Ranger Services 18th August 2015