
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: PLANNING SERVICE PRIORITIES 2018/19

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Purpose of Report

To review progress over the last year and to ask the Planning Committee to consider and approve the proposed planning service priorities for 2018/19.

Summary

The Planning Committee considers a set of planning service priorities to be delivered each year as part of our pro-active approach to performance improvement. During 2017/18 the planning service completed eight of the eleven priorities that had been identified for the year, and work is underway on the remaining three. For the year ahead, ten service priorities are proposed. Once approved, these will be included in individual staff work programmes for 2018/19.

Recommendation

That the Planning Committee consider and approve the proposed planning service priorities for 2018/19.

Background and Context

- I. In April 2017, the Planning Committee approved planning service improvement priorities for 2017/18. These improvement priorities have informed the work of the planning service during 2017/18 and are an important part of the CNPA's annual Planning Performance Framework (PPF) report. The planning service is now in the process of identifying improvement priorities to steer work over the coming year. The proposed improvement priorities outlined in this report are intended to complement and enhance the core planning services that the CNPA delivers (development plan preparation and delivery, development management, monitoring and enforcement). They are not a substitute for that work, but are about doing it in better ways to deliver better outcomes for customers and the CNPA.

Review of Service Priorities from 2017/18

2. The 11 service improvements agreed by the Planning Committee in March 2017 are shown in Table 1 below, along with a brief progress report on delivery.

Table 1	
2017/18 Planning Service Improvements	
1	Develop a series of standard planning conditions <i>The team have developed a set of standard conditions and standard informative notes based on frequent issues and mechanisms for ensuring conditions meet the. These will be used as the starting point for all conditions and kept under review.</i>
2	Prepare and implement standard legal agreement templates <i>This priority has proved difficult to progress successfully. Legal agreements have proved more difficult to conclude because of the involvement of both CNPA and local authorities. The priority will be carried forward to 2018/19 with an objective of service level agreements between CNPA and local authorities that allows the CNPA to collect planning obligations that will then be passed to a local authority. Were possible, we want to remove the need for a legal agreement or remove the requirement for a local authority to be a signatory to a legal agreement.</i>
3	Consolidate delegated authority provisions <i>Delegated authority provisions reviewed and addition delegation for enforcement notices agreed by Planning Committee</i>
4	Continue to deliver our Planning Committee training programme <i>2017/18 sessions held on:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three separate sessions on Main Issues for Local Development Plan • Hill tracks and enforcement • Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) • Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) • Site Visit to Highland Folk Museum • Site visit to Cairngorm Mountain to view restoration works • Site visit to Ballater Royal Station refurbishment
5	Prepare advice on LDP developer obligations policy <i>Detailed evidence gathered on the requirements for obligations towards education and health care across the Park. This is now used internally by planning officers and will be incorporated in the next annual update of the Local Development Plan Action Programme to provide further clarity for applicants.</i>
6	Develop and deliver a schools engagement / involvement programme <i>This work is part of the CNPA's wider corporate approach to working with schools and young people. Timetabling difficulties delayed further school participation at a Planning Committee but the work will continue to 2018/19.</i>

Table 1 2017/18 Planning Service Improvements	
7	Enhance the customer feedback process <i>Review undertaken of all feedback received to date via the existing online customer survey. Revised customer feedback process designed and agreed with Management Team. Revised feedback process to include more targeted surveys with recent applicants and consultees and will be launched during early 2018/19. Feedback received via revised process to be discussed with Developers Forum and Planning Representatives Network and shared externally through regular Planning Service Newsletter.</i>
8	Plan and deliver workshop on natural heritage with SNH, SEPA and Local Authorities <i>Workshop postponed in 2017/18 due to changes in staff. Will be delivered in 2018/19.</i>
9	Develop further materials to raise awareness, understanding and expectations of good design in the Park <i>Case studies of good design within the Park made available on CNPA website via new 'storymap' mapping system. This system can be maintained and updated with new examples of good practice as they emerge. The images from the design awards have also been used in promotional material about the National Park and the planning system.</i>
10	Review the way we report monitoring and enforcement activity in public <i>Overview of annual monitoring and enforcement activity presented to Planning Committee in December 2017. Future update reports to be presented to Committee on biannual basis in May and December each year. New enforcement page for CNPA website currently under preparation. This will be launched in early 2018/19 and will incorporate information on how to report suspected breaches of planning control, including a new hill track reporting facility.</i>
11	Review the effectiveness of established Cairngorms planning engagement forums <i>There was strong support from both Planning Representatives Network and the Developers Forum members for the continuation of each forum in a similar. The CNPA planning team will use both forums for more focussed advice and feedback over the next year.</i>

- Other notable successes during 2017/18 included receiving a two Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning for the Snow Roads Scenic Route Project and latterly, the successful consultation on anew Main Issues report. We will update the Planning Committee with a comprehensive report on PPF delivery and performance later in 2018.

Service Priorities for 2018/19

4. The proposed planning service improvements for 2018/19 are shown in Table 2. These further improvements have been discussed within the staff team and also aim to respond to general feedback received from stakeholders, including through the Planning Representatives Network and the Developers Forum. The proposed priorities build upon the progress that has been made in previous years.

Table 2	
Proposed 2017/18 Planning Service Improvements	
1	<p>Simplify mechanisms for securing planning obligations and reduce need for planning agreements.</p> <p>Establishing simpler, cheaper and faster ways of securing necessary planning obligations</p>
2	<p>Develop and deliver a schools engagement / involvement programme</p> <p>As part of the CNPA's approach to involving young people during the year of young people.</p>
3	<p>Plan and deliver workshop on natural heritage with SNH, SEPA and Local Authorities</p> <p>Sharing good practice and ensuring consistent application of policy and practice across the National Park.</p>
4	<p>Increase participation and engagement in the consultation on the proposed Local Development Plan</p> <p>Using what we have learnt from recent consultations to increase informed comment on important issues.</p>
5	<p>Consolidate past improvements and procedures</p> <p>For the past two years, the planning team has set ambitious service improvement priorities. At a time when we have also recruited a number of new staff, embedding changes requires consistent work and effort. We think that there is more work to do to gain the full benefit of the past years' service priorities such as our Planning Committee training programme, approach to monitoring and enforcement activity, using our new customer feedback processes etc.</p>
6	<p>Explore efficiencies in delivery of the CNPA's planning monitoring and enforcement role and outdoor access authority roles</p> <p>There are clear comparisons between some of the work of the planning team and outdoor access teams and this work will explore whether shared systems or procedures can create efficiencies in cost or time.</p>

Next Steps

5. Once the service improvements are approved, staff will incorporate them into the Planning Service Unit Plan for the year and into individual's work plans. The Planning Committee will continue to receive regular updates on planning service performance.
6. The Planning Committee Training Programme for 2018/19 is being mapped just now. In addition to informal sessions as part of the LDP process, the training programme will include sessions on:
 - a) Work of the Department for Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA)
 - b) Affordable Housing delivery
 - c) Good design and placemaking
 - d) Planning System and Building Regulations
 - e) Use of bonds/insurance guarantees
 - f) Site visits to two recent housing developments
 - g) Site visit to Fife Arms Hotel, Breamar
 - h) Site visit to view Beaulieu – Denny line restoration works
 - i) Site visit to a recent hydro power scheme

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April 2018

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