

Draft Board Paper – Future Scope of the Park Brand

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Purpose: To allow the ViSIT Forum to comment on the proposals within the draft paper prior to its submission to the CNPA Board in February.

This paper seeks to update the CNPA Board on recent success in implementing the Park Brand. It updates the Board on the work of the Brand Management Group, Brand Action Plan Targets and implications for use of CNPA corporate logo in the light of current thinking on the Brand.

Recommendations

That the Board note progress in rolling out the Brand and agree future use of the Corporate Logo.

Executive Summary

The Park Brand is a very valuable asset that can help promote the Park to a range of audiences and push uptake of quality and environmental standards. It can reinforce interpretive work, create a sense of place and help orientate visitors within the Park. It has huge potential to help a range of partners engage with, and support delivery of, the aims of the Park.

The Park Brand has been developed and widely welcomed by the industry. Criteria for use have been agreed and a Brand Management Group established to oversee implementation of the Brand.

It is opportune to update the Board on recent successes in Brand uptake and highlight how work on the Brand will contribute to implementation of the Park Plan. As uptake of the Brand continues to grow, there are implications for use of the CNPA Logo. This paper highlights issues and asks the Board to agree recommendations for future use of the Logo.

Background

The development of a Cairngorms Brand was widely supported by the tourism industry as a means of presenting a coherent visual identity, based on agreed brand values for the Park area. A strong brand will provide a useful tool in the delivery of a wide range of marketing and promotional activity, both on a Park-wide basis and by individual businesses/organisations, the latter being subject, along with all other users, to the satisfaction of certain criteria including environmental and quality standards (Board paper June 2004)

The intention is, through the provision of a visual identity, that the Cairngorms Brand will enhance, not replace, existing strong brands operating in the area. It will provide an additional marketing tool for businesses and will act as an umbrella for the diverse communities of interest in the Park area and in this way support the delivery of the aims of the Park. (Board paper Feb 2005)

There are several opportunities for further branding and marketing work on which views of the CNPA Board are sought and these are driven by the recent Brand Action Plan; development of Destination Management Organisations and other groups; and consideration of management structures in light of implementing the Park Plan.

Issues/Discussion

The Scottish Tourism Context

In a world of increasingly sophisticated international competition and radical changes to travel markets spurred by low cost air carriers and the internet, Scottish tourism must work hard to succeed. At a national level, the Tourism Framework for Change outlines a range of measures designed to help the tourism industry achieve the national target of 50% growth in revenues by 2015.

VisitScotland predict that around 20% of the growth target will be met by increasing the number of visitors, with the majority of growth being a result of boosting visitor spend. The focus is therefore on managing and improving the quality of experience.

Tourism in the National Park

Tourism is the biggest driver of the Cairngorms economy. It creates employment for around 5,000 people and brings roughly £170m of expenditure into the area annually. Nearly 1 ½ million people visit the Park every year for a wide range of recreation and leisure opportunities.

The National Park Plan describes a vision for the Park as *'renowned international destination...with fantastic opportunities to enjoy its special qualities...that makes a significant contribution to local regional and national identity'*.

In delivering this vision, the Park Brand plays a significant and vital role. It can provide marketing benefits and competitive advantage to businesses within the Park, encourage promotion of special qualities or products of the Park and reinforce the positive emotions we want people to associate with the Park. In a subtle though important way, it can also help engage a range of partners in coordinated delivery of the Park Plan.

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism, awarded to the Park in September 2005 provides a framework within which our tourism activities and those of our partners are planned. The Brand will feature strongly in work designed to achieve the following Park Plan outcomes:

- More people across Scotland will be more aware of the National Park, what makes it special and the opportunities it offers them.
- Everyone will know when they have arrived in the National Park and have positive feelings about arriving in a special place
- The visitor experience in the National Park will consistently exceed expectations and will drive repeat visits
- A greater percentage of people will contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the Park.
- A greater percentage of businesses will meet the quality standards and environmental management criteria of the Park brand and achieve commercial advantage through its use.

Across all these areas, principles of working as an enabling organisation, working in partnership with other agencies, communities and businesses, and finding innovative solutions are important.

Park Brand and the Brand Management Group

The Park Brand was launched in February 2005 to provide a visual image that would help build identity, convey Park values and assist in promoting the Park.



The CNPA Board established a Brand Management Group (BMG) which was given delegated powers to 'roll out and implement the Brand.'

The BMG is composed of three CNPA Board members, representatives from the Association of Cairngorms Community Councils, Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce, VisitScotland and CNPA staff drawn from Economic & Social Development and Communications teams. The group meets quarterly and communicates via e-mail between meetings.

Brand Criteria

Use of the Park Brand is linked to quality and environmental performance. For most tourism businesses, this means being quality assured by VisitScotland and being members of the Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS) or achieving membership within a year.

Initial work of the BMG focussed on setting criteria and agreeing codes of conduct for a range of sectors including: tourism business; eating establishment; outdoor activity provider; wildlife operator; golf course; event; community / tourist association; non-edible produce; edible produce. Attention of the BMG is now turning to increasing uptake of the Brand (and consequently increasing quality and environmental accreditation).

Brand Action Plan

The Brand is being used by 75 businesses at present. The Brand Action Plan, approved by the BMG in September 2006, sets ambitious targets for future uptake.

There are 800 - 1000 tourism businesses in the Park. This comprises a wide range of accommodation, attractions, activity providers, restaurants, etc. Around 370 of these are members of VisitScotland Quality Assurance. The Brand Action Plan recognised that in order for visitors and residents to build recognition of the Brand there is a 'critical mass' of businesses using the Brand that needs to be achieved. By 2008 the BMG aim to have 250 businesses using the brand and by 2010 the target is 400. This is ambitious and also necessitates these businesses having sufficient quality and environmental standards to meet the criteria. Much of CNPA's sustainable tourism work will be aligned to this ambition.

Development of 'Family' Brands

In May 2006, the BMG group began discussing use of the Brand with Aviemore & Cairngorms Destination Management Organisation. It was always envisaged that groups would want to use the Brand in some way and the creation of a “family of Brands” has always been a goal. Indeed part of the initial work, carried out by NavyBlue, focussed on how this might be achieved, and examples of how other National Parks achieve this were included in their presentation.

Having been approached by ACDMO the BMG worked with the Destination Management Organisation on a use of the brand that would help convey a consistent set of values (through use of the ‘bird icon’ and word ‘Cairngorms’) whilst recognising that this is a destination organisation operating on a smaller scale than the National Park. The BMG approved the following for use by the DMO, and are currently working with the emerging DMO in Royal Deeside on a similar approach to Brand, quality and environmental standards.



In considering use of the Brand in this way the Brand Management Group are recognising the potential to present a range of ‘sub-brands’ or “family of brands” under the umbrella Cairngorms National Park Brand.

A similar example might be VisitScotland, and VisitHighlands. For these two Brands to work successfully along side each other there is a common understanding and agreement about brand values, quality standards and marketing and promotion. They are integrated and complement each other. The ‘Highlands’ is a strong component of the ‘Scottish’ brand.

The brand management group have developed design and eligibility criteria for use by groups within the “family of brands and this is appended. The BMG view this approach as a key component to the roll out of the Brand and a good tool for engaging with a range of partners to deliver Park aims.

Similar brands could be developed for Skiing, Fishing, Golf etc and other strong propositions such as the Farmers Market, a mock up of which is illustrated below. (Not the final approved version as spacing and font had to be altered). There are also opportunities for a range of other groups to fit in with the family concept.



Working in partnership with others and particularly with fast moving private sector led organisations raises issues about how the Park can maintain and develop its identity and how we can develop consistent messages and promotion across the whole Park.

Criteria for use of Family Brands are essentially the same as for CNP brand and fall into two categories; eligibility criteria and design criteria.

The BMG consider any group (more than 2 businesses) to be eligible for Family Brand consideration provided that the following conditions are met:

- All members commit to GTBS or similar
- All members join Quality Assurance, or approved codes of conduct.
- BMG must sign off final version before it is used
- BMG maintain the right to withdraw approval
- BMG consider the group to be furthering the aims of the Park

Design Criteria specify use of the word Cairngorms and the bird icon, fonts, and clear space. Use of strap lines should be in accordance with the CNP Interpretive Framework.

➤ **The Board are asked to note progress of the Brand Management Group in rolling out and implementing the Brand.**

Use of Park Brand and Corporate Logo

The CNPA logo was developed as a corporate identity for the organisation. As a basic rule, the CNPA logo should only be used as a corporate logo to represent official business of the Park Authority. It should not be used in a broader context to promote the Park area. (Board paper Feb 2005). Likewise it was not envisaged that the Park Brand would be used to represent the work of the CNPA. However, the Brand has proven to be an effective tool in establishing partner buy-in and commitment to the aims of the Park and has been used, for example, on the Park Plan.

There are a number of other corporate publications which have a high public profile on which the Brand could be used (e.g, Local Plan, Core Paths Plan, Outdoor Access Strategy) as well as the ongoing need to produce information leaflets for a wide range of audiences (e.g. visitor information leaflets, Cairngorms Action on Training and Skills leaflet, LBAP leaflets, LBBT scheme, Sustainable Tourism updates etc.) Clearly, there are implications for the use of the CNPA logo and we wish to minimise the possible confusion arising between the two and expand the opportunity to raise the profile of the Park Brand.

If the CNPA Board agrees with the recommendations below, then the Brand will be given greater prominence and it is likely the corporate logo will be used less frequently and only in those circumstances where CNPA has sole responsibility for a publication or function.

➤ **CNPA Board is asked to agree the following recommendations:**

1. The CNPA logo should only be used to represent official business of the Park Authority (e.g. letterheads, CNPA advertisements and Board papers) and corporate publications such as the CNPA Annual Report, the work of the CNPA leaflet, Park Life where this reflects the work of the CNPA only and our Corporate Plan. The CNPA logo will also be used to acknowledge CNPA funding or other support.
2. CNPA strategy and policy documents in relation to our statutory functions such as, the National Park Plan, Outdoor Access Strategy, Local Plan and Core Paths Plan should be presented with the Park Brand to reflect that these documents relate to the Park as a whole, have been prepared through consultation in partnership with others and the responsibility to support and deliver these plans and policies lies with the CNPA and other partner organisations.
3. The Cairngorms Park Brand should appear on all materials and publications which are aimed at providing consumers, both visitors and residents, with information about

the Park such as the visitor guide, Cairngorms Explorer, Heather Hopper, biodiversity projects (LBAP), interpretation panels, point of entry markers, TIC displays, leaflet holders, LBBT courses, Cairngorms Action on Training and Skills, etc.

Structure and Management arrangements for the Brand

Currently, responsibility for the Brand ultimately rests with the Board, with certain aspects devolved to BMG who in turn devolve day to day management of processes to Heads of Group within CNPA. With completion of the Park Plan, CNPA staff are considering how best various Fora and consultative groups can help inform and direct implementation of the Plan.

An external delivery group will be established to oversee implementation of the Awareness and Understanding Theme in the Park Plan. Tourism, including the Brand and related work on increasing awareness and understanding will be a component of this and a number of other delivery groups as well as strategic groups. These are likely to draw membership from a similar pool of agencies and organisations to the Brand Management Group. Now is the time therefore to consider the future of the Brand Management Group in light of this. The Brand Management Group however has a distinct task and the current operating arrangements work well. The group is small and focussed and maintains a formal link with the CNPA Board.

- **CNPA Board is asked to note that a paper will be brought to the Board in Spring / Summer outlining a structure for advisory groups.**

Consultation

- The Brand Management Group considered issues in the paper on 22nd Jan. They were in agreement with recommendations presented.
- Visit forum – 31st Jan – comments to be added

Policy Context

The Park Brand has a vital role to play in helping deliver several policy areas. It makes a substantial contribution to the sustainable tourism strategy and action plan. It helps deliver CNPA Outdoor Access and Interpretive Strategies, (particularly around interpretation, visitor information, signage and Points of Entry).

1. Delivering Sustainability

The Park Brand has a big role to play in delivering sustainability. It helps raise quality and standards through eligibility criteria. In helping to engage a range of partners under the umbrella of the Brand it can achieve greater buy-in and longer term commitment to delivering the Park Plan. Indeed this was the ethos behind using the Brand on the cover of the Park Plan itself.

2. Delivering A Park for All

CNPA are currently developing a project to attract more people on low incomes, people of all abilities and young people into the Park. The Brand is a vital part of this project.

3. Delivering Economy, Effectiveness and Efficiency

The strong link between the Brand and quality standards helps 'lever' other objectives such as uptake of the Green Tourism Business Scheme. Greater alignment of this work will deliver greater efficiency and effectiveness. Working with groups such as DMOs allows us to convey messages about the special qualities and raise awareness and understanding of the Park in a more cost –effective way than working alone.

Implications

1. Financial Implications

There are limited financial implications. CNPA have recognised that the Brand offers huge potential and have recently increased the staff resource working on branding from part-time to full time.

2. Presentational Implications

How the Park Brand is managed, presented to visitors and residents and allowed to be used by third parties has a large bearing on how the CNPA and the CNP are perceived. The 'family' Brand approach offers huge benefits such as: Ability to reach wider audiences; Help to engage with various groups and interests, (eg Farmers' Markets); Reinforces brand through repetition of 'bird' & 'Cairngorms'; Stimulates greater uptake of Brand, and associated environmental and quality standards.

The approach is not without risks and the Brand Management Group has carefully considered these. The words 'National Park' no longer feature in the 'family' brands. It is incumbent on the organisation applying to use the brand in this way therefore, to demonstrate that they are helping present messages about the Park and supporting delivery of the Park Plan. The BMG look for strong alignment with the Interpretive Framework, and other Park policies at the time of approval. Clearly we would not wish to lose a sense of 'National Park' and the CNPA, with the Brand Management Group will monitor this situation, obtain feedback from visitors and residents, plus independent brand expertise, to ensure that the Brand continues to be used to best effect.

3. Implications for Stakeholders

The Park Brand has successfully enabled buy-in from a range of partners to the aims of the Park. The Park Plan uses the Brand to demonstrate this commitment and partnership approach to delivery of the Plan. Use of the 'family' Brand achieves the same end in a more subtle way. It allows the Farmers' Market to strengthen their own identity and at the same time align their Branding to that of the Park. It has proved a successful way of engaging with groups and highlights the potential for continuing to do so.

Next Steps

CNPA will update the Board on roll out and implementation of the Brand in December 2007.

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