

Agenda Item	10.
Report No	ECS/41/09

Outdoor Learning and the Curriculum for Excellence
Report by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport

Summary

This report highlights the added value that outdoor learning can bring to a young persons educational development and progression. It recommends a contribution from Highland Council to a Cairngorm National Park initiative that will develop the availability of outdoor learning opportunities for school pupils in Highland.

1. Background

- 1.1 Outdoor learning has traditionally consisted of adventure activities carried out away from the school campus, It has usually been accessible to a small number of pupils and been organised with staff who have had an interest in adventurous activity.

2. The Policy Framework

- 2.1 The desire to fully utilise our outdoor environment to enhance our young peoples learning experience is growing and is now clearly articulated in the approach to learning outlined in A Curriculum for Excellence-

“Curriculum for Excellence recognises that learning is embedded in experience. By taking learning outdoors we remove the barriers that the traditional classroom can put up between young people and first-hand, real-life experiences. Outdoor learning is hands-on and direct, and the knowledge that pupils gain from it is real, first-hand and unforgettable.” LTS Scotland

- 2.2 It is clearly identified that in developing the range of outdoor learning available to young people that the outdoors starts at the “school door”. It includes urban and rural locations and examining the range of uses that communities put these environments to.

- 2.3 The identified benefits to a young persons education can be enormous and impact across the capacities that our young people require to develop-

- successful learners
- confident individuals
- responsible citizens
- effective contributors

- 2.4 However the future development of outdoor learning suggests that new

approaches and methods are developed. In order to ensure that we maximise the range and breadth of these experiences it will be necessary to work with appropriate partners.

3 The Proposal

- 3.1 The Cairngorm National Park Board proposes a partnership between the local authorities which border the park, Learning and Teaching Scotland, and the National Park. The proposal is to create a post to develop new teaching methods, ideas and projects. Some eight partners would joint fund the two year post based with the national park staff team.

4 Resources / Budget Implications

- 4.1 The cost to the Council of this proposal would be £10k which can come from the Community Learning courses and classes budget.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Council contribute the sum of £10k to a £115k partnership project to research, develop and deliver learning opportunities for Highland pupils in the Cairngorm National Park.

Signature:

Designation: Director of Education, Culture and Sport

Date: 31st August 2009.

Author:

Background Papers: