

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND DELIVERY COMMITTEE MEETING of

THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

held at the Albert Hall, Ballater

on 8th June 2018 at 9.00am

PRESENT

Peter Argyle

Eleanor Mackintosh

Becky Badger

Xander McDade

Angela Douglas (Convener)

In Attendance:

Grant Moir, CEO

Peter Mayhew, Director of Conservation and Visitor Experience

Danie Ralph, Finance Manager

Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board

Apologies:

David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services

Welcome and Introduction

1. The Convener welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted.

Minutes of Last Meeting – Approval

2. The Minutes of the last meeting on 26th January 2018 were approved with no amendments.

Matters Arising

3. There were no matters arising.
4. The Convener provided an update on the Action Points from the previous meeting:
 - a) Action Point at Para. 12i) – **In Hand** – RAG system to be added to Annex I to the periodic monitoring paper for future meetings. This paper was oral for this meeting but future meetings it would be included.

- b) Action Point at Para. 22i) – **Ongoing** – Summary of current commitments against the flexible elements to be brought to the next meeting. Grant Moir reminded the Committee that this was part of Board paper that went to the Board on 16th March 2018. The Convener advised that the Committee would like regular sight of it. Agreed to bring to the next meeting.
- c) Action Points at Para. 26i & ii) – **Ongoing** – Gaelic Language plan had come back from Bord Na Gaelic with two minor amendments. These amendments will be made and then the Gaelic Language Plan will be signed off by the Board Convener and deputy Convener prior to final submission and publishing.
- d) Action Point at Para. 34i) – **Closed** – Terms of reference circulated to the Committee as a reminder and can be found on the corporate website.
- e) Action Point at Para. 34ii) - **In hand** – Short induction session following the financial year end and before the next meeting to be organised. Grant advised that an induction session would be organised from October/November 2018 to allow all new Board members due to be appointed at the end of September to be included.

Declaration of Interests

- 5. Eleanor Mackintosh declared an indirect interest in Paper 2 as she is a Board Member on the Tomintoul & Glenlivet Landscape Partnership Board, which receives Heritage Lottery Fund support for the Dark Skies project.

Draft Outturn for the year ended 31 March 2018 (Oral)

- 6. Danie Ralph presented the draft outturn for the year ended 31 March 2018. He highlighted the following:
 - a) An underspend by £1,000 on resource budget.
 - b) An overspend by £12,000 on capital budget.
 - c) Depreciation is lower than budget due to the delay in completing the new office extension delay. The depreciation profile for the new build assets will be calculated once all costs are known and costs are allocated to asset categories. Depreciation will be calculated from the day the extension was accepted by the authority.
 - d) There were very few changes to the accounts presentation compared to 16/17. FREM (the government framework for the preparation of accounts) has changed little for the year, and Audit Scotland have highlighted areas they expect to see more detail. The audit will be starting 25th June for 1 week.
 - e) Operational plan income increased by 61% due largely to increased activity on leader project claims and Tomintoul & Glenlivet landscape partnership projects. Planning fees accounted for £80,000 of operational plan income in the year.

- f) Board and staff fees decreased by £30,000. Grant advised that the organisation had more staff for less cost as currently there are 12 posts in the organisation that were being funded by having levered money in from partner organisation. He added that staff costs in general had been neutral or falling for the past five years. Danie pointed out that that this results in an anomaly in the accounts as we are required to report on the median average of staff pay: by being prudent in managing staff costs the median actually looks worse than the year before.
10. In discussion the Finance & Delivery Committee made the following comments and observations:
- a) Clarification sought as to where the income from planning fees went; did they go into the main pot? Grant Moir advised that they cover Planning Service costs first and foremost.
 - b) The Convener praised the outturn achieved and the work of the Finance Manager.
11. **The Finance and Delivery Committee noted the position.**
12. **Actions: None.**

Finance Monitoring month to 30 April 2018 (Paper 1)

13. Danie Ralph presented a summary review of income and expenditure for the month 30 April 2018. He highlighted the following points:
- a) The Red/Amber/Green (RAG) system will be used to assess status of spend against budgets.
 - b) An error in the paper states RSPB as a contributor to the ECMP. It should have been NTS, this had been updated on the website.
 - c) The template for monitoring papers had been shared with the internal auditors to show how the reporting and preparation for the papers for this Committee is carried out.
 - d) Board costs for April and May 2018 are in line with the budget for the year.
 - e) Facility costs will be looked into in more detail after taking possession of the new office extension.
14. Grant Moir reported that there had been a recent breakthrough in LEADER in respect of the Spors Na Gaelidg project where the Scottish Government had been questioning the eligibility of that project. After 18 months Scottish Government have now confirmed it was an eligible project and the funding granted would be honoured.
15. In discussion the Finance & Delivery Committee made the following comments and observations:

- a) DC was to share slides for a conference the Finance committee convenor was to attend.
- b) The level of LEADER claims outstanding at year end is high, which is normal for LEADER – it was expected that payment of claims would accelerate after the Scottish Government’s decision on the Spors Na Gaelidg project.
- c) Payment of the T&GLP claim was outstanding but HLF were due to visit the project on the following Friday (claim now received in full).
- d) Great Place Badenoch project not yet started due to late issue of permission to start, and first payment due to be made. It was noted that the 80% intervention rate is a good one.
- e) Permission to start for the HLF funded Capercaillie Project not yet received.
- f) The RAG system was to be used in next monitoring paper and enhanced with feedback from the committee.
- g) There will be stronger monitoring of Operational Plan commitments once the new finance intern starts. This is a paid post and a new graduate has been recruited.
- h) AD thanks to everyone DR and DC especially to make it possible. Appreciation excellent outturn position
- i) RB – para 22 talk about LARKS, is that HLF or just LEADER? DR just LEADER.

16. The Finance & Delivery Committee note the result of the month 30th April 2018 and the position on projects for the same period.

17. Actions:

- i. Presentation slides for finance conference to be made available to be circulated to committee members**
- ii. The committee’s appreciation was to be conveyed to all finance staff**

Tomintoul & Glenlivet Dark Sky Application (Paper 3)

18. Peter Mayhew introduced the paper which sets out the approach to a “Dark Sky” application for Tomintoul & Glenlivet and seeks the Committee’s decision on whether the Authority should act as a lead applicant for this bid. The following points were discussed:

- a) There is local support, and the application would be beneficial for the local economy.
- b) The Authority would have to compile and annual reports with the detailed work and ongoing monitoring being carried out by the new and enthusiastic Cairngorms Astronomy Group (CAG).
- c) There is at least a 10 year and may lead in time to a full application for Dark Sky status which could also cover Strathdon/Braemar.

- d) Staff commitment has been estimated as about 1 day over a year.
- e) It was decided that the project was a good and appropriate one and could be achieved minimal financial input and resources by the Authority.

19. The Finance & Delivery Committee agreed it was appropriate for the Authority to act as a lead applicant for the Tomintoul & Glenlivet Dark Sky project.

AOCB

20. Grant Moir updated the committee on:
- a) New access post funded SNH/ CNPA to oversee the completion of the Speyside Way, start work on the Deeside Way and upgrading of Speyside Way. At present the post has been advertised internally;
 - b) Interns and apprenticeships are allocated against operational plan budgets rather than Core costs;
 - c) General on new Peatland Officer post, conservation posts are being achieved within budgets and not adding additional costs to budgets; and
 - d) We have currently a finance intern, Gaelic intern and an IT apprentice and will recruit more in future years, all of which are paid post at the appropriate level.
21. Another one year settlement is expected from Scottish Government and we will soon be preparing budgets for 19/20 taking into account various funding scenarios.
22. Side letters signed for Sykes Holidays, arranged via NPP LLP. Anything received will be used for travel grant assistance the Park.
23. A senior member of NPUK has left and her work will be pick up by other National Parks - Communications and IT by Lake District, the Broads other posts.
24. 31 August Board day with the 17/18 accounts being signing at Audit and Risk Committee followed by a brief Board session and then a staff and Board BBQ to say farewell to Board Members stepping down at the end of September.

Date of Next Meeting

25. The next Finance and Delivery Committee meeting will take place on Friday 12th October 2018 venue to be confirmed.
26. The public part of this meeting finished at 10.00hours.

