

**MINUTES of MEETING of the
FINANCE COMMITTEE of**

**THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
held at Lonach Hall, Strathdon
on 1 December 2006**

Present:

Eleanor Mackintosh
David Selfridge

Bruce Luffman
Gregor Rimell

In Attendance:

David Green, Convener
Jane Hope, Chief Executive
David Cameron, Head of Corporate Services
Denby Pettitt, Finance Manager

Apologies:

None

Welcome

1. The Chairperson welcomed all present to the meeting, and noted apologies as set out above.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

2. The minutes of the previous meeting, of 20 October 2006 were approved without amendment.

Matters Arising

3. Members noted that David Bale had met with the Committee to provide further information on the Monitor Farm and Planning to Succeed projects, following initial consideration of these at the last meeting. Members had agreed the proposals following receipt of the information.

Ratification of Matters for Decision presented to previous Finance Committee meetings (Paper 1)

4. Members ratified the decisions taken at previous meetings which had not been quorate.
5. Members also recorded formally that discussions on the Monitor Farm project had recognised that it would be required to: base the project on a farm within the Park; have a majority of project group members drawn from within the Park; and ensure the aims of the project were in line with the Park Plan aims.

Balanced Scorecard Model: Finance Measures (Paper 2)

6. David Cameron introduced this paper, which set out proposals for the establishment of a "balanced scorecard" model for monitoring organisational performance. The model sought to establish key performance measures with which to monitor the overall "health" of the organisation, taking account of financial management, human resource management, governance and risk management, and corporate and operational plan delivery. The paper presented sought the Committee's views on the proposed financial management performance measures, whether the measures proposed adequately summarised the organisation's financial health, and whether the proposed tolerance levels from target were appropriate in light of the Committee's overall views of management of risk in delivering financial objectives.
7. In discussion, members sought clarification of the reasons for developing the model. David Cameron responded that it was intended to complement, rather than replace, the existing, more detailed monitoring of annual budget performance currently undertaken by the Committee. The financial management elements were intended to provide a summary overview of the Authority's current year budget position, likely outturn position, and latest estimate of the following year's finances. Any areas highlighted as at increased risk indicated a requirement for senior management to investigate reasons for variation from targets and take remedial action where necessary.
8. The balanced scorecard model as a whole also sought to embed risk management principles in the Authority's overall performance monitoring. Additionally, incorporating the results of the balanced scorecard model into quarterly operational monitoring reports to the full Board afforded an opportunity to inform the Board of the wider performance of the organisation, and the areas being reviewed by its Committees, in a summarised form.
9. Members welcomed the additional information, indicating that it was very helpful to have a summarised overview of organisational and financial performance. It was also thought to be helpful to give the full Board an at a glance overview of the status of organisational performance, and help to feed back some of the work of Committees to full Board meetings.

10. **Members agreed the proposals as set out in the paper.**

Approval of Expenditure Previously Presented to the CNPA Board (Paper 3)

11. Denby Pettitt introduced this paper, which followed up a decision in principle by the Board to continue the delivery of the Land Based Business Training Project subject to detailed consideration of expenditure proposals and affordability by the Finance Committee.
12. The paper now presented highlighted that funding for the project had been secured for 2007 in line with original plans. As the European funding component was for a calendar year, funding was secured to December 2007. The Committee's approval to delivery of the project was now requested.
13. Members noted that they were aware of a significant amount of positive feedback for this project and welcomed the confirmation of funding for the coming year.
14. **The Committee agreed the proposals set out in the paper.**
15. The Chair requested that the Committee's congratulations be forwarded to the Project Manager and project team.

Ratification of Previously Approved Expenditure Proposals (Paper 4)

16. **Members formally approved the expenditure proposals which had been agreed between Committee meetings, in line with the Committee's agreed scheme of delegation.**

Expenditure Proposal: Pan Government Agreement for Geographic Information (Paper 5)

17. David Cameron introduced this paper, which sought the Committee's approval to expenditure on the Authority's contribution to the Pan Government Agreement (PGA) under which the CNPA gained a licence to use Ordnance Survey data in mapping and Geographic Information System (GIS) products. David highlighted that, as a new entrant to the PGA, the Authority had been receiving this licence agreement free of charge until March 2006. However, the overall PGA contract was now being renegotiated and all existing users were now required to pay a contribution to acquire licensed use of the data.
18. David Cameron highlighted that the cost was relatively high, at around £50,000, and had been determined by a model applied to all participants in the PGA. Officers were continuing to raise the magnitude of this cost with the Department of Communities and Local Government, the responsible department for administering the PGA across the UK, and with the Scottish Executive.

19. **Members agreed the need for the expenditure and approved the proposal as set out in the paper.** Members also expressed their concern over the scale of the charge, given the relatively small size of the organisation and asked officers to continue to pursue this matter.

Outturn for the seven months to October 2006 (Paper 6)

20. Denby Pettitt introduced the paper, setting out the latest information, to end October 2006, on the Authority's budget monitoring for the year. Denby highlighted that expenditure continues to be ahead of last year's level, both in monetary and percentage terms, although we are under spent by £50,000 in the current year compared with the revised budget, presented to the Committee in October.
21. Denby highlighted that, following the Quarter 2 Operational Plan review which was reported to the Committee's last meeting, a list of new Operational Plan pipeline projects generated by various Groups that could be used to minimise any underspend has been presented to Management Team. As in previous years, the main thrust of Corporate Services' financial management from now until the financial year end will be to ensure that we maximise the Authority's use of its Resource Allocation from the Scottish Executive whilst continuing to ensure Value for Money is also obtained
22. Members noted the current budget monitoring position.

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23. Bruce Luffman raised a potential joint project with NESTOUR on the Highland Tourist Route which had been flagged up to him in his capacity as a Board member.
24. David Cameron responded that the Authority's potential involvement in the project would have to be appraised in terms of its fit with Corporate Plan goals and Operational Plan objectives, as was the case with all projects. He undertook to raise the point with Visitor Services and Recreation Group which would be responsible for looking at projects in this area.

Date of Next Meeting

25. The next meeting of the Finance Committee was scheduled to take place at 9am on 26 January 2007. [This date was subsequently amended following discussion with the Chair.]