

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**EXPENDITURE JUSTIFICATION/(PROJECT PROPOSAL)****1. Title**

Continuation of support for the Dee, Spey and South Esk Catchment Management Plans.

2. Expenditure Category

Operational Plan	Y	Code		Procurement	
Programme: Integrated Land Management				Grant	
Core or Project spend		Code	70219	Capital	

Is this spend to be funded from an existing budget line, existing line with additional funds or is it a totally new spend?	£ 22,000	Existing budget	
	£	Additional	
	£	New budget	

3. Description

- Brief overview of project/activity including cost summary
- Specific elements for which support is sought (if not whole project/activity)

Contributions to budgets for 2012/13 for:	
The Dee Catchment Partnership, including employment of a part time Project Officer	£10,000
The Spey Catchment Initiative, including employment of a full time Project Officer	£10,000
The South Esk Catchment Partnership, including contribution to project costs	£2,000
TOTAL	£22,000

Breakdowns of budgets and partnership funding for the three catchments are appended.

CNPA has already made funding contributions to all three catchment management partnerships, since 2004 in the case of the Dee and 2010 for the Spey and Esk. In all three cases this has enabled implementation of the respective catchment management plans (CMPs) to get underway through employment of a dedicated Project Officer. Continuation

of support for 2012/13 is sought to ensure continuity of the Project Officer posts and delivery of projects. In addition, a commitment in principle to continued support for the partnerships beyond 2013 would foster the longer term approach needed for achievement of objectives and progress on actions contained in the CMPs. Contributions to individual projects arising from the CMPs are likely to be the subject of separate EJ papers.

Also recommended is recognition of the strategic importance of the upper catchments of the other river systems in the park, namely the river Don, North Esk and tributaries of the Tay, and agreement that CNPA should be minded to take up opportunities which may emerge to support management partnerships for these catchments.

4. Rationale and Strategic Fit

- Why is the Park Authority considering investing staff and/ or financial resources in this project?
- Objectives/intended beneficiaries
- Evidence of need and demand
- Why is the Park Authority considering investing
- Fit with National Park Plan/Corporate Plan/other relevant strategies
- Linkages to other activities/projects
- What contribution may be made to improving KPI's?

Why is the Park Authority considering investing? Evidence of need and demand.

The Dee and Spey are major, nationally important river systems whose headwaters rise within the CNP and whose large river valleys characterise the Highland and Deeside areas of the Park. The smaller River South Esk has its upper catchment in Glen Clova and Glen Prosen on the south east side of the park. Careful management of upper catchments is critical to protect water quality, water resources and habitats in and around the water courses both within the Park and further downstream. Catchment management as a whole is becoming increasingly essential as rivers come under more pressure from water resource demands, climate change and changes in land use.

CNPA has been a partner in the Dee CMP since its inception in 2004, and the South Esk CMP since 2010. It was instrumental in re-invigorating the Spey CMP and establishing the Spey Catchment Initiative, whose Project Officer was employed by CNPA during 2010/11.

Catchment Management Plans and a partnership approach to delivering them have now become accepted as an effective way to ensure integrated achievement of economic, environmental and social objectives within river catchments. All three catchment partnerships are, or have the potential to be at the forefront of river restoration and

habitat enhancement best practice, with opportunities for innovative projects (eg hydro power) looking likely to develop. Participation in catchment partnerships has proved to be an excellent opportunity for CNPA to support the development and implementation of CMPs through a modest financial contribution, with benefits to the CNP being gained through the financial and management contributions of the other funding partners.

Through representation on the partnership steering and management groups we can influence how the plans are implemented, monitor progress and ensure that the work being carried out is in line with NPP2 priorities.

In addition to financial support, endorsement by CNPA lends strength and credibility to the work of the Partnerships. The multi partner/stakeholder engagement approach is very much in line with CNPAs partner model and has already achieved good results. For example, in the upper Dee catchment close links with land managers have been instrumental in moving the Upper Dee Riparian Scheme forward.

As the CMPs are long term and not time limited, continuation of funding, and in particular the Project Officers posts is critical to the successful achievement of objectives. Many of the actions agreed take a considerable amount of time, for example land management projects requiring SRDP funding. Another example, the Spey Catchment Assessment, is a key piece of work which may only be completed towards the end of the current phase but is essential to have in place before we can deliver significant river restoration or natural flood management projects. Confirmation of ongoing support for catchment management from CNPA would therefore be of considerable value in securing the future of these initiatives.

Objectives

The objectives for each catchment are laid out in the respective CMPs, available on the respective partnerships' websites or in [L:\Strategic Land Use\Catchment Management\All catchments funding review 2012](#). In summary the objectives for each catchment cover the following:

- Quality of water
- Water resources
- Managing floods
- River engineering
- Habitats and species and
- Socio-economic factors.

Fit with National Park Plan/Corporate Plan/other relevant strategies

Fit with Draft National Park Plan 2

The Dee, Spey and South Esk CMPs broadly support seven of the ten outcomes for 2012

to 2017 as detailed below.

1. More people will learn about, enjoy and help to conserve & enhance the special natural and cultural qualities of the Park

Raising awareness of the special valuable species and habitats associated with the catchments is an important element of all CMPs, eg the South Esk CMP has a particular focus on promoting outdoor access at river sites for currently less engaged social groups.

2. The quality and connectivity of habitats will have improved, enhancing the landscape at a Park scale

The catchment management approach is a great example of true landscape scale planning. The catchments of the Dee and Spey particularly represent a large geographical area of the park which can be managed in an integrated way through partnership agreements stemming from CMPs. Improvement to quality of habitats is central to CMPs, particularly through creation and expansion of riparian woodland, riparian habitat restoration and improvement, and enhancement of associated wetlands. Riparian woodland expansion provides an ideal way to enhance connectivity of habitats as it forms corridors along river banks which offer the potential to link other areas of woodland in a way which also improves landscape quality.

3. The species for which the Cairngorms National Park is most important will be in better conservation status in the Park

The CMPs include objectives and specific actions in relation to European Protected Species including Atlantic Salmon, Freshwater Pearl Mussel and otter. Interventions to protect these flagship species will have a favourable effect on many other species occupying the same habitats. Projects addressing invasive non-native species of the riparian zone such as giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and American mink have already been successful in the Dee and South Esk catchments and will continue to reduce the threat posed to important native species.

4. The qualities of wildness in the Park will be greater than in 2010

Several projects are planned or already underway to re-naturalise previously modified stretches of river, eg re-meandering of the Logie Burn near Dinnet in the Dee catchment is now complete, and re-naturalisation of straightened stretches of two tributaries of the Dulnain is a likely outcome of the Spey Catchment Initiative. This approach contributes significantly to improving the wildness of the landscape.

5. There will be a better targeted programme of advice and support for land managers in the Park that delivers the National Park Plan

The catchment management partnerships include land managers and are an ideal forum

for identifying areas where we can support land managers in achieving the objectives of the CMPs, which often tie in closely with the aims of the NPP. The Upper Dee Riparian Scheme is an example of successful land owner/manager involvement which has been critical to its success so far. Similarly, in the Spey catchment, collaboration between land managers and public agencies has led to some inspiring developments on the ground.

6. The economy of the Park will have grown and diversified, drawing on the Park's special qualities

The CMPs are built around the economic importance of the catchments for water resources, ecosystem services, flood control, agriculture, tourism and recreation, and include objectives to protect and increase the associated contributions to the local economies. This is particularly important in the upland areas of the catchments within the CNP with more fragile economies. In the case of all three CMPs currently supported, the lead role played by the salmon fisheries boards has ensured that the economic importance of salmon fishing is given due weight. For example, by protecting the Atlantic salmon fishery the Upper Dee Riparian Scheme will secure the 500 jobs on Deeside which depend on it.

8. Business and communities will be successfully adapting to a low carbon economy

The Dee CMP and Spey Catchment Initiative include plans to support development of small scale hydro schemes at locations where this would represent a feasible renewables option.

The catchment management approach will also contribute to a number of the proposed Policy Directions, in particular:

Enhance the special landscape qualities

Enhance biodiversity

Expand and enhance woodland

Enhance resilience of habitats and land use to climate change

Target proactive advice and public support to help land managers deliver multiple benefits

Fit with Forestry and Woodland Framework 2008

The CMPs contribute to the following Strategic Objectives of the Framework, mainly through expansion and enhancement of riparian woodland:

- a) Promote multi-objective forest and woodland management that delivers environmental, economic and social benefits.

- b) Enhance the condition of existing woodland cover and expand to develop habitat networks that complement the landscape character and other land uses.

(Expansion of riparian woodland is a prime example of enhancing habitat connectivity as, by their nature, riparian woodlands form linear corridors which can link adjacent larger areas of woodland. The focus on the upper catchments has particular significance as riparian planting will create woodland habitat in areas with little other tree cover.)

- c) Encourage full range of forest ecosystems in targeted areas and the re-development of woodland types that have declined. (ie riparian and associated woodland within upper catchments).

- f) Promote community participation in forest and woodland planning and management.

(All CMPs were developed and are being implemented with local community consultation, and active participation from communities in delivery of projects is being encouraged, eg volunteer groups are involved in tackling invasive plant species in all three catchments.)

- g) Contribute to national efforts to address climate change

(Flood risk alleviation measures within the CMPs eg increased riparian woodland, re-naturalised channel geomorphology, address the increasing threat from climate change induced flooding. Carbon sequestration is also provided by woodland expansion.)

The CMPs also lend strong support to two of the 'Priorities for the CNP', ie:

- a) Enhance forest habitat networks between isolated fragments of native woodland, both within and between river catchments; and

- f) Conserve and expand riparian woodland using appropriate native species for the benefit of biodiversity and downstream flood alleviation purposes.

Linkages to other activities/projects

As a result of the Dee and Spey CMPs, several discreet projects have evolved and are now being developed and implemented under separate management groups and with their own funding packages. CNPA's financial and management contribution to these is outwith the scope of this EJ and will be dealt with separately. The main additional projects are the Upper Dee Riparian Scheme and the Upper Dee Flood Plain Restoration Scheme. There is potential for several projects to develop from the Spey Catchment Initiative, for example improved riparian access and interpretation in Aviemore in partnership with AVCC and COAT (eg canoe launch site, parking, paths, good example of promoting enjoyment of the

Park as well as habitat improvement.). A feasibility study for the re-meandering of two of the tributaries of the River Dulnain is already underway and if the outcomes are promising this will form another separate project starting in 2012.

5. Option Analysis

- Are there other ways in which the above objectives could be achieved?
- If so, why is this the preferred option?

Progress to date has demonstrated clearly that development and especially delivery of Catchment Management Plans is best achieved under the models adopted for the Dee, Spey and South Esk, ie a dedicated Project Officer overseen by a multi-partner management group which includes a wide range of expertise and influence. The Park benefits from the services of the Project Officers, and also partners who are themselves undertaking specific actions as part of the plans. Some of the objectives could be achieved by individual partner organisations working alone, but the benefits of an integrated approach including all stakeholders, essential for catchment management, would be lost.

Contributing to catchment partnerships represents the most effective way for CNPA to achieve its objectives for the parts of the upper river catchments within the park boundaries, and to ensure actions in these upstream areas are compatible with objectives further downstream.

6. Risk Assessment

- Strategic, Organisational Risks: Does the project assist in managing or reducing any of the strategic risks identified by the Audit Committee or Management Team? Please reference the Strategic Risk Register and specify which risks are addressed through the project and how these risks are addressed.
- Project Risks: Are there risks to the CNPA in funding this project/activity?
- Are there risks in the project/activity not being delivered to required timescale/quality?
- Comment on the likelihood of such risks occurring, their potential impact, and (where appropriate) any action that would be taken to mitigate the risks.

There are few likely risks.

CNPA has already been involved in the Dee CMP for a number of years and there is a proven track record of delivery which meets agreed targets effectively.

Agreed outputs for Implementation Phase 1 of the South Esk CMP have also been met, and the confirmed continuation of the Project Co-ordinator post by Angus Council will help to ensure achievement of objectives for Phase 2.

The Spey Catchment Initiative has been active for a shorter time but has made good progress towards objectives. Continuation is dependent on recruitment of a replacement Project Officer and the staff change will cause a delay of around 4 months, but these are not considered major problems. Confidence in the Initiative is illustrated by the recent agreement of the Spey District Salmon Fisheries Board to host the PO post.

For all three CMPs there are a large number of other funding partners ensuring that there is a high likelihood of sufficient continued financial support for the Plans. It is also possible that new funding partners or sources will be introduced in future.

CNPA attendance at steering and management group meetings will ensure that any threats to the CMPs are identified and addressed at an early stage.

7. Costs and Funding

- Detail the financial costs of the project/activity
- Detail the sources of funding
- Justification also needs to be given if the CNPA is the major funder
- Detail any non-monetary costs to the CNPA (such as Member or staff input)

Full details of costs and funding packages for the Dee Catchment Partnership, Spey Catchment Initiative and South Esk Catchment Management Plan are appended.

Approximately six days of CNPA staff time will be required for steering/management group meetings during 2012/13. An additional time commitment of up to 10 days may be required in relation to separate projects linked to the CMPs.

8. Funding conditions

- Detail the project specific conditions that need to be included in any contract for services or grant offer letter in order that CNPA obtains the intended outcomes and Value for Money
- In the case of grant offers, our Financial Memorandum requires that SEERAD agree these conditions in advance of the grant offer being made

N/A.

9. Deliverables/ Impact Assessment including Equalities

- Could the project have any discriminatory or negative effects on particular groups?
- Have opportunities been taken to promote equality within the project design?
- Does the project fall within one of the Park Authorities priority areas for considering equality impacts?

- What end products/outputs will be delivered?
- How will success be measured?
- How will the project be monitored and what will be the feedback to the CNPA?

Social inclusion has been considered as part of all three CMPs and positive rather than negative equality impacts are anticipated.

Details of outcomes and monitoring procedures are given in the respective CMPs. Success is measured systematically against agreed targets for delivery of specific actions and projects for each catchment. Detailed reports are given to the management groups (including CNPA representative) by the Project Officers and partners at regular meetings. Updates are also circulated regularly from the partnerships.

10. Value for Money

- In view of the costs, do the deliverables appear to offer value for money? (consider cost of comparable projects, where available).

The joint funding of the Plans is cost effective for all the partners involved as the sum of all the contributions is substantial enough for real progress to be made towards delivery, over a reasonably long period of time. CNPA is proposing to contribute relatively modest amounts which would achieve little in isolation, but will make a substantial difference to the successful achievement of the objectives for management of the catchments.

11. Exit or Continuation Arrangements (where applicable)

- If this is not a discrete, time-limited, project or piece of work, what are the exit/continuation arrangements for when CNPA support ceases?

The finance sought at this point is for one year only (2012/13), and making this contribution in no way obliges CNPA to make further contributions. However, Catchment Management Partnerships for the Dee, Spey and South Esk catchments have already run for extended periods and are likely to continue beyond the current programmes running to the end of 2012/13. By their nature many of the projects underway are on-going and in some cases open ended, and in the longer term their overall success is dependent on extended support from partners.

It is hoped that CNPA support can be continued as long as the management plans are contributing to the NPP2 objectives. A reduced level of financial input in future may be an option, but a corresponding reduction in outputs is a likely consequence. If CNPA support was withdrawn altogether beyond 2013, it is uncertain that the partnerships could be sustained by the other funding partners or by the recruitment of new funding sources.

12. Additionality

- Does this work/project substitute for or duplicate work being carried out or proposed by others?
- What would be the effects of the CNPA not supporting the project? Would it proceed without CNPA support?

The Catchment Management Partnerships include all the main stakeholders engaged in catchment management activities across the three catchments and, by doing so, encompass all major projects and ensure actions are implemented in an integrated way. This approach prevents duplication.

CNPA has so far been a high profile, key partner in the CMPs. Withdrawal of support for any of them would give out very negative signals and might reduce the confidence of other funders and threaten the continuation of successful delivery. It would also mean the loss of a cost effective opportunity to be involved in pro-active, landscape scale catchment management which contributes significantly to the aims of the national park.

13. Stakeholder Support

- Have the organisations and/or communities that would have an interest in this work/project been involved, and are they supportive?
- If supporter are also not funders an explanation may be required.

The CMPs have been developed by a wide range of partner organisations and stakeholders, including local communities, through extensive stakeholder input and consultation. This inclusive approach is continued in many aspects of their implementation, for example active participation of communities in project delivery.

14. Recommendation

It is recommended that funding support is continued for the Dee, Spey and South Esk Catchment Partnerships for 2012/13, and that continued support for Catchment Management Partnerships for river systems in the CNP is approved in principle subject to budget availability.

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

15. Decision to Approve or Reject

Head of Group

Name:	Signature:	Date:

Head of Corporate Services

Name:	Signature:	Date:

Chief Executive

Name:	Signature:	Date:

Finance Committee

Name:	Signature:	Date:

Board

Not applicable – below approval limits		
Name:	Signature:	Date:

Scottish Government

Not applicable – below approval limits		
Name:	Signature:	Date: