

# CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

## EXPENDITURE JUSTIFICATION

### I. Title

Cairngorms Business Partnership Delivery Programme – 2009/10

### 2. Expenditure Category

Operational Plan	98	Code	75201000	Project	
	101		75205000		
	103		75207000		
	104		75101000		
	161		77501000		
(goal description) Promote economic opportunities created by National Park status Strengthen CCC and Business Associations Benchmark performance to improve customer experience Annual tourism conference Support for roll out of CNP Brand				Grant	√
Core or Project spend		Code		Consultancy	

Is this spend to be funded from an existing budget line, existing line with additional funds or is it a totally new spend?	£ 70,000	Existing budget	√
	£	Additional budget	
	£	New budget	

### 3. Description

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

Several business organisations across the Cairngorms area are now working together on a collaborative basis, under the umbrella of the Cairngorms Business Partnership, to capitalise on the economic opportunities afforded by National Park status. The specific elements of their wider work programme for which CNPA funding support is sought comprise –

- A contribution to staffing costs;

- Development of a marketing framework and action plan for the National Park and related destinations;
- Business barometer;
- Development of private sector led Park-wide visitor website;
- Park Aware Programme;
- Cairngorms National Park tourism conference;
- DOVE customer feedback survey.

#### 4. Rationale and Strategic Fit

- Objectives/intended beneficiaries
- Evidence of need and demand
- Fit with National Park Plan/Corporate Plan/other relevant strategies
- Linkages to other activities/projects

The primary beneficiaries from the CBP's activities will be businesses through increased revenues (including businesses that indirectly benefit from tourism expenditure), and visitors through an improved quality of experience.

The CBP is playing a strong role in delivering elements of the Park Plan. Some of the key outcomes they are helping to deliver include –

##### *Making Tourism and Business More Sustainable*

- ii. The visitor experience in the National Park will consistently exceed expectations and will drive repeat visits/more business opportunities. The Park will compare well against the rest of Scotland and other National Parks;
- iii. There will be a more even distribution of visitor numbers throughout the year;
- iv. A greater percentage of visitors will contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the Park;
- v. 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.

##### *Raising Awareness and Understanding of the Park*

- i. More people across Scotland will be more aware of the National Park, what makes it special and the opportunities it offers them;
- iv. More people who have visited the Park will have high quality experiences and will tell positive stories about the area.

The CBP is helping to deliver the following Corporate Plan achievements –

- Businesses within the Park provide a high quality, environmentally friendly service and benefit from using the Park brand;
- A voluntary contribution scheme for visitors is in place to collect funding for initiatives

within the Park;

- A National Park web portal is in place and working effectively to meet customers/users needs;
- Cairngorms National Park is well signposted and promoted across Scotland.

## 5. Option Analysis

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

The Park Authority could deliver some or all of the CBP work programme itself, although we would still have to engage effectively with the business community across the Park in doing so. This would not fit well with our enabling approach and would almost certainly lead to a lower level of private sector buy-in and reduced resource input from the business community across the Park.

As in the past, we could work with the individual organisations that comprise the CBP to deliver different elements of the work programme. However, the Board have previously agreed that we should encourage the private sector to collaborate across the Park in order to make more efficient and effective use of their collective resources and to develop its capacity to deliver coherent pan-Park actions. As is explained in more detail in the accompanying Board paper, these partnership arrangements are a stepping stone to a merged business organisation for the Park.

## 6. Risk Assessment

- 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 no obvious risks to the CNPA in funding this programme of action.

Slippage would have potentially negative funding impacts in that some of the partner funding contributions will be tied to be spent within this financial year.

The timescale is now tight for delivering this set of actions but the CBP believe that they are deliverable. For the marketing framework and action plan a steering group comprising both CBP and public sector representatives will manage the work.

There will be other arrangements to oversee the programme of action and regular liaison with public sector partners (particularly through the newly merged Park Plan delivery group for Raising Awareness and Understanding of the Park/Making Tourism and Business More Sustainable.

## 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)

	Costs	£
Marketing framework and action plan		30000
Business barometer		10000
Visitor website		15000
Park Aware Programme		5000
CNP tourism conference		4000
Customer satisfaction/feedback survey		10000
A contribution to staffing costs	<u>50000</u>	(£35K – ACDMO, £15K – RDDMO)
	124000	
The planned funding package is as follows -		£
CNPA		70000
HIE		16000
Scottish Enterprise		15000
Aberdeenshire Council		10000
The Highland Council		<u>13000</u>
	124000	

Funding towards the business barometer and the customer satisfaction/feedback survey has already been committed from Scottish Enterprise and Aberdeenshire Council. Whilst most of the rest of the funding package has yet to be secured, all of the funders have agreed to the principle of funding the above pieces of work and have been formally approached for support.

It should be noted that several of the other funders are also contributing to the costs of staff and project activity at the DMO level. The above only relates to those activities that are being progressed on a Park-wide basis. The staffing contributions reflect the staff effort not only to progress the above actions but also to progress the actions set out at the end of section 9 that require only a time input. Several CNPA staff members will also contribute time to working with the Cairngorms Business Partnership in progressing their programme of action.

Whilst there is no private sector funding reflected in this Park-wide programme of action, there is private sector income to the different organisations within the CBP through membership income, purchasing marketing packages and advertising revenue (from Parki and Badenoch & Strathspey 'What's On'). This income is reflected in their individual business plans and will form a core income stream for the future merged organisation.

## 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

I. Payments will not be made in advance of need and will require partner contributions for the specified actions to be secured;

2. A performance review meeting to be held in January involving an appropriate Board member(s).

## 9. Deliverables/ Impact Assessment

- 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?

### Marketing framework and action plan

This will provide a clear framework and set of actions for marketing the Cairngorms National Park and the related destinations within it, e.g. Royal Deeside and the Angus Glens. The significance of this work was highlighted at the Board discussion session on the 'Economy of the Park' (12 June, Glen Esk).

### Business barometer

The business barometer, which has previously been introduced in Badenoch and Strathspey, will be rolled out across the National Park. This provides regular data on how well businesses are doing as well as on levels of business confidence and investment plans.

### Visitor website

The Cairngorms National Park web portal will be launched soon. As has been agreed by the Portal Steering Group, visitor information on the web portal will only be hosted by the CNPA until the CBP has a private sector led visitor website in place – which we will help fund.

### Park Aware Programme

To effectively 'sell' the area to visitors there is a need to make sure frontline tourism staff and other people who come into regular contact with visitors have a strong awareness both of the unique qualities of the area and of the visits/activities that are available to enhance their holiday experience. At the moment there are a range of different delivery mechanisms that aim to achieve this –

- Some LBBT/CAP training courses;
- Cairngorms Connections on-line product knowledge training;
- Interpretation workshops;
- Royal Deeside product knowledge project.

A piece of work is therefore planned to review these linked pieces of work and identify any opportunities for rationalisation/improvement. Initially this will simply be a scoping exercise.

### Cairngorms National Park tourism conference

The existing annual tourism conference that has previously been organised by the CNPA, will in future be developed and co-ordinated by the CBP.

### Customer satisfaction/feedback survey

Building on initial work in Badenoch and Strathspey, the DOVE (Delivering Outstanding Visitor Enjoyment) customer feedback project will be extended throughout the Park. Using a variety of feedback mechanisms, this allows visitor feedback and satisfaction data to be captured and collated on an ongoing basis. As other parts of the Highlands are also using this system, useful comparative benchmark data on how the Cairngorms National Park is performing relative to other areas can be collated. This information can be used to both improve the performance of individual businesses and to improve the tourism product within the destination.

Other priorities for the Cairngorms Business Partnership which will involve a time input include –

- Planning for trade show attendance;
- Developing a co-ordinated approach to planning and promoting festivals and events;
- Developing a strategy for customer information and service;
- Business networking events/fam days;
- Voluntary visitor contribution scheme(s);
- Investigate potential for integrated QA/GTBS scheme.

Appropriate monitoring and evaluation arrangements will be built into each action. Oversight on progress will be maintained by the new joint priority for action Delivery Group for Making Tourism and Business Sustainable/Promoting Enjoyment and Understanding of the Park.

## **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 costs appear reasonable and in line with similar pieces of work undertaken in the past. Where actions are being outsourced or consultancy is being bought in, the work will be tendered to ensure value for money.

## 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?

In the future, work will be progressed via a new Park wide business organisation. This will provide a strong vehicle for continued delivery of various elements within the Park Plan. There is a strong rationale for continuing to provide financial support tied to clearly identified deliverables and outcomes – in the same way that we support the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust. The new business model is, however, likely to be more efficient and effective than the previous model of working through several organisations. As such, the total public funding requirement is likely to reduce.

## 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?

This work programme does not duplicate work being carried out or proposed by others – indeed it avoids potential duplication or fragmentation of activities.

At the moment the primary focus for other funders is the DMOs. Without CNPA support, this park wide programme of action could not proceed.

## 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.

This programme of action reflects the priorities of the different business bodies that are currently working together under the umbrella of the CBP.

The Local authorities and Enterprise Networks have also been consulted and are supportive of this programme of work.

## 14. Recommendation

I recommend that funding support of £70,000 be approved for 2009/10 subject to the conditions set out in section 8.

Name: Andrew Harper

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 18 August 2009

**I5. 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**

Name:	Signature:	Date:

**Scottish Government**

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