

# **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND DELIVERY COMMITTEE MEETING of**

## **THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**held at the Cairngorm Hotel, Aviemore  
on 22nd February 2019 at 8.30 am**

### **PRESENT**

Rebecca Badger  
Eleanor Mackintosh  
Xander McDade

Ian McLaren (Vice-Chair)  
William Munro (Chair)  
Anne Rae Macdonald

### **In Attendance:**

Grant Moir, CEO  
David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services  
Murray Ferguson, Director of Rural Development & Planning  
Danie Ralph, Finance Manager  
Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board

**Apologies:           None.**

### **Welcome and Apologies**

1. Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and there were no apologies.

### **Minutes of Last Meeting – Approval**

2. The draft Minutes of the meetings on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2018 and 25<sup>th</sup> January 2019 were approved with no amendments.

### **Matters Arising**

3. The Convener provided an update on the Action Points from the previous meeting:
  - a) Action Point at Para. 4i): **Closed** – William Munro has taken the position of Chair of the Finance & Delivery Committee to last 3 years.
  - b) Action Point at Para. 7i): **Closed** – Ian McLaren has taken the position of Vice-Chair of the Finance & Delivery Committee to last 3 years.

4. The Chair invited members of the Committee to raise anything around thinking contained in previous minutes that may have implications going forward. The following point was raised:
  - a) Had land owners argued that the creation of paths on their land could result in an increase in liability? David Cameron advised that this had not happened often as the paths often being created or upgraded were core paths where previous court cases have set out access routes for core paths and where the liability lies.
5. There were no other matters arising which would not be covered elsewhere on the agenda.

### **Declaration of Interests**

6. No interests were declared.

### **Board Committees Terms of Reference (Paper 1)**

7. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services introduced the paper which sets out the purpose and responsibilities of the Finance & Delivery Committee and to give members an opportunity to discuss the role the Committee and any future training requirements.
8. The Finance & Delivery Committee discussed the paper and made the following comments and observations:
  - a) Comment made that the membership quorum and the annual membership change in Annex 1 of the paper was now out of date following the Board meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2018. David Cameron agreed but advised that these amendments to the Terms of Reference could only be made by the Board and a paper would be taken to the next Board meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019.
  - b) A member queried why the CEO appeared to be non-voting for the other two Committee's but not for the Finance & Delivery Committee. David Cameron advised that this was most likely a typo as the CEO had always been a non-voting member of the Committee.
  - c) With reference to point e) of the Finance & Delivery Committee Terms of Reference (Annex 1, page 3), at what point to project become key projects? David Cameron explained that key projects often had risk attached, were of scale or had local/ reputational issues and this was the subjective risk management approach taken by Management Team and the Organisation Management Group.
  - d) A member queried what makes projects come forward to the Committee and why had there did not appear to have been many in recent months? Grant Moir

advised that it was often the scale of projects that made them come before the Committee. He added that it may seem that not many have come to the Committee recently as many key projects would have been brought at the beginning of the project which had been looking for commitment for 3 years. David Cameron added that it was a complimentary part of the Authority's reporting, where the Board sees corporate delivery performance every 6 months and uses that feedback from the Board discussions to feedback into work of the Finance & Delivery Committee and the Audit & Risk Committee.

9. **The Finance & Delivery Committee noted the paper.**
10. **The Finance & Delivery Committee Chair invited Members to have a think of any training requirements and to email him directly with any suggestions.**
11. **Action:**
  - i. **Members to have a think of any training requirements and to email the Finance & Delivery Committee Chair with any suggestions.**

#### **Visitor Giving Scheme: Memo of Agreement with Cairngorms Trust (Paper 2)**

12. Murray Ferguson, Director of Rural Development and Planning introduced Paper 2 which presents a draft of the memo of Agreement that is proposed with the Cairngorms Trust and which will underpin the Authority's partnership approach to the management of the scheme.
13. The Finance & Delivery Committee discussed the paper and made the following comments and observations:
  - a) Had something like this been done before and how much was expected to be raised? Murray Ferguson advised that it was difficult to estimate but they thought in the region of £10-£20k within a few years.
  - b) Could people make donations via gift aid? David Cameron confirmed that the Cairngorms Trust were now registered to receive Gift Aid.
  - c) David Cameron reported that the Cairngorm Trust were eager to take this forward and they would tweak the wording of the memo of agreement to say that the business plan would not be developed for the visitor scheme alone but the visitor scheme would be an element of a bigger business plan. He added that the Cairngorms Trust Trustees had agreed that to launch the Visitor Giving scheme at this year's Cairngorms Nature Weekend. There was currently £20k

sitting in the bank and the plan was to make an award of £5k to one community-led project to re-emphasise the benefits of the visitor giving scheme and to open a small grants scheme.

- d) The Board Convener reported that he and the CEO had met with Angus McNichol, Chair of the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership and they had had a robust discussion about how they perceive the issue, although it would be nice to see them involved, they got the Cairngorms Business Partnership to agree not to go out and activate against the visitor giving scheme.
- e) Was there an opportunity to attract more legacy money? Danie Ralph, Finance Manager advised that this had been researched and many bigger charities employ teams to chase legacy money and then get the returns. David Cameron advised that it had been in a suite of ideas presented to the Trust by the Trust Manager recently and that the Cairngorms Trust website would be undergoing redevelopment shortly as it had been focussed on the LEADER element until now. Murray Ferguson reminded the Committee that it was important that the CNPA do not overstep on governance and that the Visitor Giving would be led by the Cairngorms Trust.
- f) What was the purpose of Annex 1 in relation to the Memo of Agreement (Annex 2)? Murray Ferguson advised that it was just a recap of what had gone to the Board before.
- g) Who were going to be the members of the visitor giving partnership group? Murray Ferguson reported that it had not yet been decided but the current thinking was 2 from the CNPA, the Chair of the Tourism Partnership and a member of staff plus 3 Cairngorms Trust Trustees.
- h) A Member queried the use of the word 'visitors' and wondered if this was restricting the donations. Murray Ferguson advised that the term visitors included day visitors. David Cameron reported that the Cairngorms Trust had had the same discussion at their meeting last week. He explained that the Business Plan had to consider how the Trustees would continue as a viable charity should LEADER funding cease through Brexit. Other mechanisms would be looked into to take and redistribute donations from residents.
- i) What criteria would the Trustees be using to select which projects are awarded funding? And would the CNPA have an opportunity to see the criteria? Murray Ferguson advised that the criteria would be set out in their business plan however he highlighted that the main bulk of money would be spent on nature and paths. He added that it would be up to the Trust to agree the funding for projects but with two CNPA representatives on the Steering group this would ensure some influence on the decision making. He warned that it was important that the Trust were seen as separate from the CNPA.
- j) Some nervousness was raised as previously with the setting up of the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Forum (COAT) which then decided to go global, how could the Authority stop this from happening again? David Cameron

explained that this was a different model, the Upper Deeside Path Group had exhausted all work so then went Cairngorm wide and then after 8 years their natural progression was to expand the geography. For the Cairngorms Trust the whole focus is around investing in geography and communities of the National Park continuing a community led development program.

- k) A Member warned about the need to exercise caution when promoting the scheme to residents as the Trust will be heavily seen as the Authority.
- l) Could the nominee on the Steering group be of the Board rather than Chair of tourism partnership? This was agreed as it was noted that the Chair of the Tourism group would not always be a CNPA Board member.
- m) A member advised that this was slightly different from LEADER as this would be very personal high profile money that would need to be audit proof and what happens to projects in the longer term will be in the public eye. Grant Moir agreed that the communications were a key part of this.
- n) A member suggested that it was important to provide people who did not want to donate electronically with an opportunity to donate. Murray Ferguson agreed and advised that a whole range of options had been explored and would be accommodated.
- o) Request was made to update Annex I taking out the reference to the Cairngorms Business Partnership and explaining that the scheme would not be exclusively digital. It was agreed to update this and bring it before the Board as an information paper to the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019 meeting.

**14. The Finance & Delivery Committee noted and discussed the Memo of Agreement which will be subject to further discussion with the Trust and signed off by the CNPA CEO.**

**15. Actions:**

- i. **The CNPA Board member on the Tourism Partnership Group to sit on the Visitor Giving Partnership Group.**
- ii. **An information paper on the current thinking on visitor giving to be prepared and brought before the Board at their next meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019.**

**Finance Monitoring: 10 months to 31 January 2019 (Paper 3)**

16. Danie Ralph, Finance Manager introduced Paper 3 which presents a summary review of income and expenditure for the 10months to 31 January 2019. He then provided an overview on how the accounts are pulled together.

17. The Finance & Delivery Committee discussed the paper and made the following comments and observations:
- a) A Member asked if anything was of concern that needed highlighting. Danie Ralph confirmed that there was not.
  - b) David Cameron reported that they were further down the road in commitments and spending this year than on past years. LEADER have caught up with payments and are therefore not in same place as last year, expenditure was brought forward where possible.
  - c) David Cameron provided an update on LEADER payments. He advised that LEADER in Edinburgh were clearing payments within 2 days after we submit a claim to them. He added that the Authority were proved right all along with regards to the past disagreements around eligibility.
  - d) Comment made that Annex 2 was difficult to interpret, should it be viewed in conjunction with something else? Danie Ralph reported that from next year it will be easier, he added that every year a step change is made in how the information is presented to make the information clearer. David Cameron suggested that this could be a future training topic.
18. **The Finance & Delivery Committee noted the results of the 10 months to 31 January 2019 and the position on projects in the same period.**
19. **Action:           None.**

#### **2019/20 Budget Development (Paper 4)**

20. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services introduced Paper 4 which presents the current position on development of the Authority's budget for the 2019/2020 financial year.
21. The Finance & Delivery Committee discussed the paper and made the following comments and observations:
- a) The Chair sought reassurance that the net expenditure position of £32,000 was normal. Grant Moir and David Cameron confirmed that it was.
  - b) The Chair noted that the increase in employers contribution had a huge impact on the budget and asked whether this posed a risk on being able to deliver the outcomes for which funding had been secured meaning it would not go ahead?,
  - c) With regards to the 2 vacant posts, what were they and what would the impact be? David Cameron explained that one was a learning development post which was being looked at to be brought under the community development side of

things. The Learning Development post holder was currently on secondment and will be budgeted in a years' time anyway. At the same time there is the LEADER team who are permanent members of staff who will in 18months come back into the organisation. This was a way of holding the budget down. The other post was that of the Economic Development manager. David Cameron advised that he would flag up any risks in the Corporate Plan updates twice annually and if there were any risks around staffing and resource investment wasn't going to allow for delivery of projects then this was the time when it would be highlighted to the Board.

- d) What was the ratio of staff to costs against the income? David Cameron advised that it would be 62% staff against costs.
- e) A request was made that column titles be included on Annex 2. This was agreed.
- f) Concern that community priorities were most visible to communities and the reputation risk associated with that if there was understaffing. Grant Moir reassured the Committee that there is enough capacity in the contracts with Voluntary Action Badenoch and Strathspey (VABS) and Marr Area Partnership (MAP). He went onto advise that they were looking at how the Forward Planning Team would work better with the Communities Manager with the view that the LEADER staff would start to return to the organisation in a years' time. David Cameron highlighted that there was considerable investment planned of £144k, looking at investing into community engagement support, not all on staff but on projects.
- g) With regards to the shift of work of the Forward Planning staff how did the individuals feel about it? Grant Moir advised that they were already linked together. Murray Ferguson added that the staff feel positive about it and reminded the Committee that the Forward Planning team were also the key team who prepare the National Park Partnership Plan.
- h) Comment made that the 62% ratio would have to be kept an eye on going forward.
- i) What was the rule of thumb regarding the ratio of staff costs against budget? A Committee member advised that at the inception of the National Park Authority the rule of thumb was 50%. Grant Moir reported that a substantial number of posts were fixed term contracts and that they are looked at on a case by case basis.

## **22. The Finance & Delivery Committee:**

- a) **Considered the update on the estimated budget position for 2019/20 and;**
- b) **Considered whether any aspects of the budget merit further consideration in the development of final proposals to be presented to the Board in March.**

23. **Action:       None.**

## **AOCB**

24. There were no other items of business raised.
25. David Cameron advised that the Authority as a founding member of the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland (OATS), OATS were asking if they can invite Paths For All and Sustrans to become members of OATS. The Committee agreed to this.
26. Danie Ralph reminded members to submit expenses claims before the year end or by the end of April 2019 for expenses incurred in March 2019.
27. The Chair highlighted that this was Rebecca's Badger last Finance & Delivery Committee meeting. He thanked her for her valued contribution on the Committee and wished her all the best for the future.

## **Date of Next Meeting**

28. The next Finance and Delivery Committee meeting will take place on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2019 in the Baxter room of Braemar Highland Games Centre, Braemar.
29. The public part of this meeting finished at 10.10hours.