

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

**THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
held at Glenmore Lodge, Glenmore
on 7th August 2009**

Present:

Eleanor Mackintosh (Chair)	Mary McCafferty
David Green	Richard Stroud
David Fallows	

In Attendance:

Jane Hope, Chief Executive
Alistair Hight, Finance Manager
Pete Crane, Senior Visitor Services Officer

Apologies

None

Welcome and Apologies

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes of Meeting 15th May 2009

2. The minutes of the meeting were agreed without amendment.

Matters Arising

3. Further to Paragraph 6, it was noted that discussions were now in hand with the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust regarding their using the Cairngorms Brand as a condition of their Grant offer for 2009/10.

2009/10 Financial Monitoring (Paper 1)

4. Alistair Hight introduced the paper which presented a summary review of income and expenditure for the first three months of the financial year and a projection of the financial outcome for the year to the 31st March 2010. The paper noted a £12,000 surplus for this period reflecting an underspend in core operating costs. The projected outcome for the year showed an overspend which reflected the practice of over-programming by 20% in the Operational Plan. This initial over-programming was intended to allow programme managers as much leeway as

possible in developing their programme plans for delivery in the remaining three quarters of the year. With spending proceeding according to plan, the next phase of the budgeting year would need to look at bringing this 20% over-plan back to affordable levels. This work was in hand. Over-programming was not a problem; it reflected a very practical approach to the inevitable uncertainties of bringing together funding from a range of different sources.

5. It was noted that there were some known savings on salaries and these had been factored into the budgets. Other savings had not been predicted at the time of putting the budget together, and these would also be picked up in the reprofiling of the budget.

6. **The Finance Committee agreed the recommendations of the Paper as follows:**
 - a) **Noted the results for the three month period to the end of June 2009 and the projected outcome for the twelve months to the 31st March 2010.**
 - b) **Noted the further analysis of Operational Plan expenditure by programme.**

Advice to Audit Committee on Potential Internal Audit Review of Project Delivery (Oral Discussion)

7. This item was raised by the Convener of the Finance Committee, following her attendance at the recent Audit Committee. The Audit Committee approved each year a programme of internal audit work which usually included an audit of a number of sample projects which the Park Authority had taken forward. She raised the question whether the Finance Committee should be offering views to the Audit Committee in selecting projects, on the basis that in approving expenditure justifications, the Finance Committee frequently pointed up particular issues. It would be useful to make sure the organisation learned from the experience of carrying out projects. The question was whether the Finance Committee could identify useful learning opportunities from projects at the point when the Expenditure Justification came to the Finance Committee.

8. It was noted that there was a difference between operational scrutinies and audit reviews. For audit reviews, it would be difficult for the Finance Committee to be objective, and it was appropriate that the decisions on which projects were audited was best left to the Audit Committee and the Internal Auditors. As far as operational reviews were concerned, it was recognised as useful to be able to stand back and look at how a project had been delivered all the way through from conception to completion. This did not really seem a job for the Auditors and it was accepted that it might possibly be a piece of work best done internally. Jane Hope agreed to discuss with David Cameron how best to take this forward and report back to the Finance Committee.

9. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged that the Finance Committee might usefully keep in mind when appraising expenditure justifications that there may be some issues

that warranted the project being flagged up to the Audit Committee. For example, those projects that were particularly complex and involved a large number of different funders were likely to have a high resource cost to the CNPA. It would be useful in some of these cases to get a handle on this from an Audit review.

- 10. Jane Hope and David Cameron to report back to Finance Committee on proposals for lifetime project assessment.**

AOCB

11. None

Date of Next Meeting

12. 30th October 2009, Lonach Hall, Strathdon
13. [Post meeting note: subsequently agreed with Convener that would be useful to have a one item Finance Committee meeting prior to the Board Meeting on the 4th September, which would be considering an Expenditure Justification.]