

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

**THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
held at Laggan Village Hall
on 7 November 2003**

Present:

Andrew Thin
Eleanor Mackintosh
Gregor Rimmell
David Selfridge
Joyce Simpson

In Attendance:

Jane Hope, Interim Chief Executive
Andy Rinning, Head of Corporate Services
Bruce Luffman: Board Member

Apologies:

None

Election of Chairperson

1. Eleanor Mackintosh was nominated, seconded and elected as Chairperson.

Current Year's Financial Provision (paper 1)

2. The Head of Corporate Services introduced the paper which provided the Committee with an overview of the actual spend to end September and projected outturn for the remainder of the financial year. Final outturn is anticipated to be £1.99 million compared to the original budget of £2.006 million approved by the Board in May 2003. Spend during the first 6 months had been principally directed towards staff salaries, recruitment, corporate ID, website and new computer and telephone systems. The cost of refurbishment of accommodation at Grantown and Ballater had exceeded the original estimated figure. Contracting out the recruitment process for Park Authority staff and higher than expected advertising cost have led to a significant increase in this item of expenditure. Savings had been made on the delivery of both corporate ID and website. Programme expenditure of £282K had been included in the original budget but a figure of £159K was considered to

be a more realistic outturn. It is anticipated that the current provision of £1.99 will be fully spent. In discussion the following points were made:

- a) In response to a question about the proposed level of Programme spend and whether it was considered to be a realistic estimate of the level of spend in the first year of the Park Authority, Andrew Thin explained the difficulties that might be experienced on Programme spend primarily as a result of relevant staff not yet being in post. Taking account of the current recruitment campaign, it was anticipated that the Programme spend would meet the figure allocated in the budget.

3. The paper was noted.

Draft Budget for 3 Years 2004 - 2007 (paper 2)

4. Jane Hope introduced the paper which provided the Committee with an overview of the proposed estimated provision for the Park Authority's requirements covering the three year period 2004-05 to 2006-07, as set out in the draft Corporate Plan. The paper on the Corporate Plan - for discussion at the Board meeting - sets out the justification and the budget provision for the Park Authority over the next 3 years.
5. As a newly formed organisation it is difficult to estimate with any real degree of accuracy the predicted spend in future years but forecasts have been based on known figures for the Cairngorm Partnership and by building in additional requirements for growth in the organisation. Estimates are based on CNPA's priorities and the Scottish Executive are aware of what the Park Authority will be bidding for during the current public expenditure cycle.
6. Running costs for the organisation are predictable over future years and the only large element of expenditure during the current financial year will be the costs involved in the refurbishment programmes at Grantown and Ballater. Programme spend reflects existing commitments over the next 2 years and an estimate of the predicted spend based on priorities to be determined by the Board. Programme spend will be reviewed on a regular basis. In discussion the following points were made:
 - a) On a question about the allocation of staff costs in relation to core and programme spend, Jane Hope explained that permanent staff costs were met from core funding and project staff costs were borne by the relevant project budgets.
 - b) On a question of funding Ranger Services, Jane Hope explained that CNPA would support existing Ranger Services. There are no current proposals for the Park Authority to employ its own Ranger Service comparable to Loch Lomond & Trossachs. Funding from CNPA would be complimentary and additional to funding from other sources and there is a clear understanding that CNPA's contribution would not result in double counting of funds provided by other NDPB's or Agencies.
 - c) The question was asked whether the salary element for members reflected the increase in workload now expected from members. The Convenor pointed out that the current arrangements in place allowed for a review of members remuneration to take place in

the Spring. He suggested that members remuneration and allowances might be made available in the Annual Report and asked Jane Hope to consider how best this information could be made available. His own view was that members' salaries were already in the public domain but no policy had been set on disclosure of members allowances.

7. The paper was noted.

8. Action:

- **Jane Hope to identify an appropriate method of providing details of members' remuneration and allowances in the Annual Report.**

Financial Framework Governing the National Park (paper 3)

9. The Head of Corporate Services introduced the paper which sets out the formal arrangements required between the National Park Authority and the Scottish Executive in relation to financial operations. As an Executive NDPB the financial arrangements of the Park Authority are governed by the provisions contained in a management statement and Financial memorandum to be agreed between the Park Authority and the Scottish Executive. The current document, prepared by the Scottish Executive, is in draft form and subject to discussion and amendment. A final version of the document will be submitted to the Committee for adoption in due course.

10. The paper was noted.

AOCB

11. No other business was raised.

Date of Next Meeting

12. No specific date set but to be arranged for late February or early March 2004, venue to be decided.