

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: RATIFICATION OF EXPENDITURE PROPOSALS

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Purpose

To summarise expenditure that has been approved by the Finance Committee since their last meeting on 19 November 2004, ratify other expenditure that has been committed under the 2004/05 Operational Plan and consider the proposal to commit expenditure on Corporate fleeces and identity badges to raise the Authority's corporate image.

Recommendations

- That the Committee formally approve the expenditure detailed in para.1 that it has previously approved by e-mail outwith the normal quarterly meetings.
- That the Committee ratify the expenditure on media training and opinion polling that has been tendered and awarded in line with the 2004/05 Operational Plan.
- That the Committee approve the expenditure on corporate fleeces and identity badges that will improve the visibility of the Park Authority.
- That the Committee agree to continue the present system of approving expenditure between meetings by e-mail.

Executive Summary

- (i) The Authority's Financial Memorandum sets out the monetary level above which expenditure needs to be approved by the Finance Committee as a means of internal control. This primarily relates to the award of consultancies valued at more than £10,000 used in meeting the Operational Plan.
- (ii) Since the Committee meets quarterly there will be instances when expenditure needs to be approved between meetings. At their meeting in August the Finance Committee agreed this could be done via e-mail and that a summary of the proposals agreed in this manner would be presented to the next scheduled meeting of the Committee.
- (iii) As we approach the year-end there may be an increasing number of proposals requiring approval between meetings. As in the past, these will be circulated by e-mail provided the Committee remain content with this approach.

RATIFICATION OF EXPENDITURE PROPOSALS

Proposals previously agreed by e-mail

1. Since the Finance Committee meeting on 19 November 2004 the following expenditure plans have been submitted to the Committee by e-mail for approval:

Expenditure	Head of Group	Date circulated	£'000	E-mail approval received
Digital Video project	A. Harper	23 Nov	11	Yes
Natural Resources consultancy	F. Newcombe	22 Dec	20	Yes

2. All the above expenditure received approval, once a majority of responses in favour were received the expenditure was committed. There were no responses against any item.
3. As we approach the year-end there may be an increasing number of proposals requiring approval between meetings. As in the past, these will be circulated by e-mail provided the Committee remain content with this approach.

Media training and opinion polling

4. Both these items of expenditure were included in the Communications strategy approved by the Board. They have been tendered and have received Scottish Executive approval. For completeness we are asking for the formal Finance Committee ratification of the expenditure.
5. Media training covers modules tailored to individual needs. They include basic presentation skills and media awareness for all staff and board members, intermediate training for those likely to be in contact with local press and broadcasters and finally high level media training to cover national media exposure. The initial budget for this was £25,000 and Kane Communications successfully tendered at a total cost of £24,000 + VAT.
6. Opinion polling seeks to help the Park Authority to understand public opinion for two main reasons - to help us respond better to peoples views and to evaluate our success in becoming a 'trusted and respected organisation'. The initial budget for this was £20,000 and Scotinform successfully tendered at a total cost of £19,985 + VAT.

Corporate fleeces and identity badges

7. Officers have been investigating the cost of enhancing the Park Authority's corporate image through providing fleece jackets and name/identity badges, each bearing the Authority's name and logo. Both items would improve the visibility of the Authority and the identification of those representing the Authority at various events.

8. Quotes received indicate a total cost for 75 fleeces for staff and Board members of £3,300 and name badges are likely to cost around £550.
9. Whilst the total cost is within delegated authority limits for officers, the Committee's views on these proposals to enhance the Authority's corporate image and associated potential expenditure would be appreciated.

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