

**APPROVED MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND
DELIVERY COMMITTEE MEETING of
THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**held at Community Hall, Boat of Garten
on 12th December 2014 at 9.00am**

PRESENT

Kate Howie (Convenor)
Angela Douglas
Gregor Rimell

Eleanor Mackintosh
Duncan Bryden

In Attendance:

Grant Moir, Chief Executive
David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services
Danie Ralph, Finance Manager
Pete Crane, Head of Visitor Services
David Clyne, Recreation & Access Manager
Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board
Amy MacKenzie, Finance Assistant

Apologies: None

Welcome and Introduction

1. The Convenor welcomed everyone to the meeting and there were no apologies.
2. The Convenor requested that Declarations of Interest to be added to Agenda at future meetings.

Minutes of Last Meeting – Approval

3. The Minutes of the last meeting on 1 August 2014 were approved with no amendments.
4. **Action:** **None.**

Matters Arising

5. There were no matters arising.

Election of Committee Convenor

6. David Cameron highlighted that according to Standing Orders and agreed by the Board in September Election of Committee Convenor was due to take place. He therefore asked for nominations for the Convenor of the Committee.
7. Kate Howie was nominated by Committee members. There being only one nomination, David Cameron declared Kate Howie as appointed as Convenor.
7. **Action: None.**

Finance Monitoring: 7 Months to 31 October 2014 (Paper 1)

8. Danie Ralph, Finance Manager introduced Paper 1 which presents a summary review of income and expenditure, including a summary of Operational Plan expenditure, for the 7 months to 31 October 2014, together with the revised income and expenditure to 31 March 2015.
9. In discussion the following points were debated:
 - a) How realistic it is for some work behind plan to genuinely catch up by financial year end. David Cameron advised that the current position this year is ahead of typical past years. Some slippage was still expected hence there was confidence that the remaining level of over-programming would continue to erode;
 - b) What the £144k overspend entails: essentially an expectation of some further reduction or slippage in operational plan expenditure, while there is also an expectation of some further reductions in staff salaries and running costs before the end of March;
 - c) The expected timings of LEADER funding for Admin costs from the Scottish Government;
 - d) The projected timescales involved in starting the new LEADER Programme;
10. **The Finance and Delivery Committee agreed to note the three recommendations as set out in the Paper.**

11. **Action: None.**

Cairngorms LEADER Programme 2014-2020: Draft Memorandum of Agreement (Paper 2)

12. David Cameron introduced the Paper which sets out a draft Memorandum of Agreement to cover the operation of the new LEADER Programme and to identify the roles and responsibilities of the Cairngorms Local Action Group (CLAG) and the

Authority. He added that the Memorandum of Agreement had already been approved by CLAG.

13. In discussion the following points were debated:

- a) Where the CNPA Board would sit as an accountable body, in line with the Cairngorms Local Action Trust (CLAT) and the CLAG. David Cameron advised that the National Park Authority has the responsibility for the management and stewardship of funding allocated to, and for line management and hosting of administration of, the LEADER Programme. Ensuring appropriate internal frameworks are in place to service SG requirements which will be set out in a Service Level Agreement (SLA) and support the LAG. Overall, Accountable Body responsibilities for the new programme will be just as they have been previously. He added the CNPA would be held to account for any payments that were ultimately determined as ineligible by audit;
- b) The checks and balances that Finance Committee or Audit Committee would be expected to carry out. David advised that the Service Level Agreement will set these out and it will follow a standard control process whereby CNPA Management would be expected to design and implement appropriate control systems just as are required for all our other operational processes. There would be an annual internal audit review with the report to Audit Committee. An audit would also be undertaken by the Scottish Government Monitoring and Accreditation Unit.
- c) Whether there may be any issues over the employment of the administrative team supporting the CLAT and CLAG in relation to expectation of Office of Scottish Charities Regulator, continuity of employment, pensions and severance. There would not be any transfer of employment from the Cairngorms National Park Authority to the Trust once established.;
- d) The set up and continuity of the Trust beyond LEADER, in order to be a vehicle that could handle potential funding sources;
- e) Charitable Trust can access funds easier which would be dispersed by the Cairngorms Local Action Trust, for delivery of the National Park Partnership Plan;
- f) The route for donations is the same as had been intended when Board considered a potential for a “Common Good” fund.

14. **The Finance and Delivery Committee agreed to the recommendations set out in the Paper.**

15. **Action: None.**

COAT HLF 'Scotland's National Parks: The People and the Mountains' Project (Paper 3)

16. David Cameron declared an indirect interest in the Paper as he is a Director of Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust. The Finance and Delivery Committee agreed that he could remain present during discussions on the Paper given that he has only advisory rather than decision making authority on the Committee.
17. David Clyne, Recreation and Access Manager introduced the Paper which seeks approval of a £275,000 grant towards a Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust led project. He added that key routes such as Mount Keen and Beinn A Ghlo would be upgraded, enhanced and repaired as part of the capital infrastructure part of the Project.
18. In discussion the following points were debated:
 - a) The levels of approval being requested and whether this should be a full Board decision or not, noting that information on this COAT bid and the CNPA support of the bid had been reported to Board in a number of meetings;
 - b) Confirmation that funding from other funders is already in place. David Clyne agreed that it was;
 - c) Clarification that this is a commitment of £55,000 for every financial year for the next five years;
 - d) Agreement that the COAT Board need to increase their press and publicity to put better publicise their activities;
 - e) The proportion of CNPA overall budget funding that COAT has received as a cumulative picture with narrative to be put before the Board at their next meeting in March 2015;
 - f) For the above to be incorporated into the narrative of the Corporate Plan and for the Finance and Delivery Committee to have sight of the paper at their next meeting in February 2015;
 - g) Agreement that they would like to see in map form, all the paths that COAT have created, enhanced and repaired since the existence of the Trust with careful colouring to portray the differences;
 - h) Agreement that it would be useful for the map to highlight the path connections which leads to better health, income generation and generally enabling more people usage of the paths..
19. **The Finance and Delivery Committee agreed to**
 - a) **Note the requirement for a supporting letter to secure HLF Stage 2 Award;**

- b) **Approve an overall grant of £275,000 towards the project over the next five financial years.**

20. Actions:

- i. **David Clyne to clarify a number of points of language in the proposal for the record and re-circulate to the Convenor.**
- ii. **David Clyne to ask COAT to increase their promotional activities.**
- iii. **CNPA Corporate Plan to incorporate all as detailed in paragraphs 19. f) g) h) and i) and to be brought before Finance and Delivery Committee at their next meeting, on 13 February 2015.**
- iv. **The Action points detailed in paragraphs 18g & h to be carried into subsequent updates to the Board on COAT activity.**

Scottish Scenic Routes Project: Corgarff (Paper 4)

21. Pete Crane introduced the Paper which details the funding and project plan for the delivery of the Corgarff site as part of Phase 2 of the Project. He advised that the majority of the works will be carried out off site.

22. In discussion the following points were debated:

- a) Planning permission for the structure would be sought at the Planning Committee meeting of 19th December 2014;
- b) The ownership of the structure and the implications to the CNPA of owning it;
- c) The expected cost of the upkeep of the structure;
- d) The ownership of the forthcoming structures;
- e) What the structure will look like: modern standing stones that can be sat in;
- f) A baseline for Visitor Numbers using the route that can be improved upon following construction of the structure;
- g) Exposure on social media;
- h) Agreement of it being another positive news story for the Cairngorms National Park.

23. **The Finance and Delivery Committee agreed to:**

- a) **Note the CNPA's involvement in the Scottish Scenic Routes Project;**
- b) **Approve the Project Initiation Document and the expenditure of up to £125,000 of additional funds from the Scottish Government.**

24. **Action: None.**

2015/ 16 Forward Budget Considerations (Paper 5)

25. David Cameron presented Paper 5 which presents an initial review of considerations around the 2015/16 Authority's Budget Position.
26. In discussion the following points were debated:
- a) The Operational Plan and base level Operational Plan
 - b) The reduction in Grant and Aid and the effect that will have on budgets and programming;
 - c) Recognition that the leverage to date has been excellent and agreement that in future the CNPA will have to focus their efforts on fewer pieces of work;
 - d) Could a comparison of staffing costs be created which shows these relative to similar bodies such as SNH and LLTNP. David Cameron advised some work could be done however it may be difficult to establish like for like comparisons;
 - e) Time spent on elements of work to be piloted by Management Team next financial year.
27. **The Finance and Delivery Committee agreed to the recommendations set out in the Paper.**
28. **Action: Staff Costs Comparison to be prepared.**

AOCB

29. There were no items of competent business presented.

Date of Next Meeting

30. The next Finance and Delivery Committee meeting will take place on Friday 13th February 2015 in Carrbridge, venue to be confirmed. The Finance and Delivery Committee agreed to bring the meeting forward by 15mins to 8.45am
31. The meeting concluded at 10.19am.