

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

**held at Community Hall, Boat of Garten  
on 13th February 2015 at 9.15am**

**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  
Lee Haxton, Communities 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.

**Minutes of Last Meeting – Approval**

2. The Minutes of the last meeting on 12 December 2014 were approved with the following amendments:
- At Para 13c: in addition to OSCR the following words to be added: '*continuity of employment, pensions and severance*'. The words '*there would not be any transfer of employment from the Cairngorms National Park Authority to the Trust once established*' should be inserted.
  - At Para 18g &h: The action points within these paragraphs to be carried into subsequent updates to the Board on COAT activity.

## Matters Arising

3. The Convenor sought an update on the Action Points from the previous meeting which would not be covered by items coming up on the agenda:
  - Action Point at Para. 20, iii: David Cameron advised that it had been decided that detail of specific activities would not be incorporated into the Corporate Plan and that he had not had the opportunity to bring all the parts of these actions together in time for this Committee meeting. He advised that COAT are currently working towards a Heritage Lottery Funding deadline and would hope to get the more detailed delivery information back to the next Finance and Delivery Committee Meeting. Grant Moir advised that as soon as it was completed it would be circulated around the Board. David Cameron added that the reference to the work on the support to COAT would likely be included in the Operational Plan paper on the Formal Board Agenda in March 2015.
  - Action Point at Para. 28 – It is hoped that this would be incorporated into the Corporate Plan and Budget which should be brought before the Board in March 2015.
  - The status of the Scenic Routes Project: Grant Moir advised that the Applicant had resubmitted the Application and it was scheduled for the Planning Committee meeting in March 2015. He went on to advise that they are working with the Scottish Government to ensure that the funding for the project remained available to the Authority and can still be drawn down.

## Declaration of Interests

4. There were no interests to declare.

## Finance Monitoring: 9 Months to 31 December 2014 (Paper 1)

5. Danie Ralph introduced this Paper which presents a summary review of the income and expenditure, including a summary of Operational Plan expenditure, for the 9 months to 31 December 2014, together with the revised incomes and expenditure to 31 March 2015. He highlighted the following points:
  - a) Figures for month 10 were now calculated which illustrated a positive outcome and an additional sheet was distributed to Finance Committee to reflect this;
  - b) 2 payments had been made to the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust and one further payment was still to be made;
  - c) Scenic Routes project costs have been recognised in the budgeting however the project money had not yet been received. The funding is expected to be made available towards the end of February, beginning of March 2015.

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6. In discussion the following points were debated:
  - a) How had this affected the projected outturn? Danie Ralph advised that at end of December it was sitting at £124K, at the end of January it was reduced to £71K and end of March it is projected to break even.
  - b) An Camas Mòr payment overdue of £49, 000 as part of the Section 75 legal agreement S75. A 6 month window to end of August 2014 was given to them; Grant met with them yesterday and reminded them that it was still outstanding and if it was not paid by mid-March 2015, legal action would be sought. David Cameron agreed that he would ask CNPA Legal Advisor from Harper McLeod to draft a letter to them ready for posting on 23 February 2015.
  - c) Agreement that from an Audit point of view, it is vital to begin the process of taking legal action to obtain the overdue payment detailed above.
  - d) Were the costs associated with legal challenges in limbo? David Cameron advised that as things stand there was a valid challenge in place and subject to costs, come the year end a position may need to be taken – most likely a note to the accounts recognising a contingent liability rather than a provision in the accounts - if the case was still active at 31 March. He added that for legal challenges that were still active or live, there would be ongoing costs involved which could not be avoided.
  
7. **The Finance and Delivery Committee agreed to:**
  - a) **note the results of the 9 months period to 31 December 2014;**
  - b) **note the analysis of the Operational Plan net expenditure by programme for the 9 months period to 31 December 2014; and,**
  - c) **note the projected outturn for the remaining 3 months of the financial year ended 31 March 2015.**
  
8. **Action:** **David Cameron to ask, CNPA Legal Advisor from Harper McLeod to draft a letter to Rothiemurchus Estate to begin the legal process for recovering the £49,000 debt and to have it ready for posting on 23 February 2015.**

### **Community Development: Draft Memorandum of Agreement (Paper 2)**

9. Lee Haxton introduced this Paper which seeks approval of the finalisation of the Memorandum of Agreement with the Marr Area Partnership (MAP) and Voluntary Action Badenoch & Strathspey (VABS) for the delivery of community development and engagement activities. He highlighted the following points:
  - The monitoring of the project feeds directly into the Indicators within the new Corporate Plan

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- With reference to 5d of the Paper, MAP had been asked to cover the entire East site of the Cairngorms National Park, not just their area.

10. In discussion the following points were debated:

- a) Would MAP be one of the types of groups who would be eligible for drawing down funds when the Community Empowerment Bill comes into force? Lee Haxton advised that MAP's role would be to support groups accessing this funding.
- b) Agreement that Section 3 of the draft Memorandum of Agreement was well written and well defined.
- c) What would the process be if performance became poor or unsatisfied? Lee Haxton advised that a discussion would take place between him and the underperforming organisation in the first instance. He added that he could not foresee this happening because of the good relationships already established and that he intended on monitoring the progress closely. Grant Moir went on to advise that it would also be written into the terms and conditions that funding could be clawed back or recovered should these not be adequately met.
- d) In reference to the last paragraph of the Memorandum of Agreement, David Cameron to add a statement which states that the CNPA would write to MAP if there was a concern regarding the delivery of the agreement.
- e) Whether or not there was a mechanism in place that would catch when things were going wrong. Reference to the Offer letter to be added to the Memorandum of Agreement.
- f) Are the organisations ready to start as of 1 April 2015? Lee Haxton advised that they were.
- g) Where do MAP and VABS get their core funding from and what proportion of their overall funding is this contribution, would these activities be additional to their core activities? Lee advised that MAP currently have 2 service level agreements with Community Planning Partnerships this will help them to add value and make them the best that they can be. David Cameron advised that it would be made clear that the contributions would be towards the wider geographic range of activity and enhancing capacity for the organisations to deliver, emphasising that our arrangement is a grant contribution to support third party activities rather than a contract for specific service. David Cameron agreed to change the word 'core' to something else, in the last paragraph of page 1 of the Memorandum of Agreement to make it clear the grant was towards adding value and capacity.
- h) Reassurance that the activities can be monitored and that the use of the Park Brand will also be incorporated? Lee agreed that it would be and the Park Brand would be emphasised to both MAP and VABS.

**11. The Finance and Delivery Committee welcomed the paper and confirmed they were enthusiastic about the potential for this activity. The Committee agreed the Paper and its recommendations, and hoped to obtain regular**

feedback during the life of the project – if possible by way of a visit to some of the projects being supported.

12. **Actions:**

- i. **In reference to the last paragraph of the Memorandum of Agreement, David Cameron to add a statement which states that the CNPA would write to MAP if there was a concern regarding the successful delivery of the agreement.**
- ii. **Reference to the Offer letter to be added to the Memorandum of Agreement.**
- iii. **David Cameron agreed to change the word ‘core’ to something else, in the last paragraph of page 1 of the Memorandum of Agreement to make it clear.**

**2015/ 16 Budget and Operational Plan (Paper 3)**

13. David Cameron introduced the Paper which presents the Authority’s financial position for the 2015/16 financial year. He explained the activities will be detailed in the Proposed Budgets and Operational Plan paper which will be brought before the Board at their meeting in March 2015.
14. In discussion the following points were debated:
  - a) What were the reasons behind the reduction in staff salaries was this as a result of staff having left the organisation? David Cameron advised that the work of these posts were either dropped or reallocated to existing staff. He added that £140,000 worth of salaries had been saved this year, which would also be carried into 2015/16. Savings from staff salaries is also absorbed by pay award, staff increment increases through annual progression and pension increases.
  - b) Clarification as to whether the £20,000 saved in staff salaries off-set the IT professional support. David Cameron advised that this was true to a point; the overall net change is the movement of budget from staff salaries to outsource contracts.
  - c) Why was an increase in Board salary budget forecast? David advised that there had been vacancies in Board memberships throughout the current year which had created a saving against budget that would not be carried into 2015/16. He added that a 1% increase would be applied to Board salaries on 1 April 2015. Both these factors combined to result in the small increase shown.
  - d) Good to see that office running costs had decreased.

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- e) Assuming that the new LEADER Programme begins in April 2015; would the CNPA have to pay the LEADER staff? David explained the current envisaged timetable: he and Alice Mayne were working towards submitting the Business case at the end of February 2015, with feedback from Scottish Government early March to April 2015. He advised that the earliest the LAG would be able to begin would be June 2015. Either a proportion from the allocation or a separate grant from the Scottish Government would be drawn down to cover the costs of paying the LEADER staff. Grant Moir informed the Committee that the reason for the delay was that the SRDP had not yet been signed off by the European Commission. David added that there are currently a small number of LAGs who are close to getting their LEADER Strategy signed off and there may be the potential for some LAGs to begin in a pilot approach.
- f) The £15,000 under Project investments, under Planning on the Annex to the paper, was this spare money? David Cameron advised that it was not, lines of projects had been identified and consisted of 5 or 6 activities each costing £2,000- £3,000 each. He added that the specifics of what it has been allocated against would be included in the narrative in the Board Paper in March 2015, with the current presentation simply grouping these smaller identified lines of activity together under this heading.
- g) Agreement that having a tight budget was not always a negative aspect in terms of enhancing focus on delivery priorities and the importance of applying and drawing down funding from elsewhere.
- h) What was happening with the Cairngorms Fund? David advised that this was being taken forward by the LAG.

15. **The Finance and Delivery Committee agreed to the recommendations.**

16. **Action:                      None.**

### **AOCB**

17. There were no other items of competent business presented.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

18. The next Finance and Delivery Committee meeting will take place on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2015 in the Beaton Craigie Room, Ballater.

19. The meeting concluded at 10.05am.