
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: Nominations for the Board of the Cairngorms Outdoor Access and Trust and contribution towards the Trust's first Business Plan

Prepared by: Bob Grant, Senior Outdoor Access Officer

Purpose

The Board of the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust can include a maximum of two nominees from the Cairngorms National Park Authority. This paper seeks the Board's decision on who should fulfil this role. In addition, the paper also seeks approval of funding a programme of work for the financial year 2008/09.

Recommendations

That the Board:

- a) Approves that there will be two nominees as Directors of the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust, one of whom will be the Head of Corporate Services and the other a CNPA Board member;
- b) Identifies who should be the Board nominee (subject to the decision on the recommendation above); and
- c) Approves a contribution of £150,000 towards the delivery of the Trust's 2008/09 business plan.

Executive Summary

The Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust came into effect on 1 April 2008. To reflect both the wider scope of this Trust from its predecessor body and its importance in delivering key aspects of the National Park Plan, the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Trust permit two Trust Directors to be nominated from the National Park Authority. This paper presents the skills and knowledge required and highlights some practical considerations in helping the Board select two nominees. The first year of operation on the Trust is one of developing projects and securing a stable long-term footing for the Trust, with much work required to secure external funds for future works. This paper highlights the work that will be undertaken in the first year and the funding required.

NOMINATIONS FOR THE BOARD OF THE CAIRNGORMS OUTDOOR ACCESS AND TRUST AND CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE TRUST'S FIRST BUSINESS PLAN - FOR DECISION

Background

1. In April 2007 the Cairngorms National Park Authority Board approved the principle of supporting the establishment of a Trust that would deliver a wide range of related projects related to outdoor access. In June 2007 the Board approved the establishment of such a Trust and that a transition from the existing Upper Deeside Access Trust was the favoured model to pursue subject to final conformation by the Finance Committee. At the Finance Committee meeting of 21 September, approval was granted to pursue this option provided that the risks to CNPA were limited through the detail contained within the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the new company. This has been achieved and the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust came into effect on 1 April 2008. The establishment of this new, partnership-based delivery mechanism is a priority action in the National Park Plan. The Board members of Upper Deeside Access Trust, its funding partners and staff are all to be commended for their cooperation and foresight.

Structure of the Trust and Appointing Trustees

2. As this has been a transition from an existing Trust to a new one, the current Trustees remain in place. At present the composition of the Trust Board includes nominees from Aberdeenshire Council, Scottish Natural Heritage, Balmoral Estates and the Cairngorms National Park Authority. In addition, the Trust has an independent chair who is currently Pat Chalmers, a former Controller of BBC Scotland.
3. Member organisations can nominate a maximum of one potential Trustee but, reflecting the important role that CNPA has in ensuring access infrastructure is delivered consistently across the National Park, CNPA has the opportunity to have two Trustees on the Board of the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust.
4. In 2007 the Finance Committee approved the appointment of the Head of Corporate Services to the Trust Board and this has ensured that risks to CNPA have been minimised and that the new Memorandum and Articles of Association are consistent with, and complimentary to the objectives contained within the National Park Plan. The Trust is still in its infancy and there will be issues to deal with over funding, governance and organisational structure which would continue to indicate the benefit from the continued presence of the Head of Corporate Services on the Trust Board.
5. The present composition of the COAT Board of Trustees reflects the previous geographical spread of the Upper Deeside Access Trust and, with the exception of CNPA's Head of Corporate Services, has a bias towards members from the east of the Park. It will be an important and early win for the Trust to demonstrate an

ability to work across the whole of the National Park. The current work programme is oriented in that direction with some early assistance being given to the Kingussie Paths Group. In time it would be desirable for the Trustees to broadly reflect the geography of the National Park. Seeking a nomination from the CNPA Board who comes from the west of the National Park would help to address this issue. This may also provide an opportunity to encourage partner funding from sources that, to date, have not been willing to contribute to the Trust.

Recommendation

6. **To address both the issues above it is recommended that the Board:**
- a) **Approves that there will be two nominees as Directors of the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust, one of whom will be the Head of Corporate Services and the other a CNPA Board member;**
 - b) **Identifies who should be the Board nominee (subject to the decision on the recommendation above); and**
 - c) **Approves a contribution of £150,000 towards the delivery of the Trust's 2008/09 business plan.**

Funding the 2008/09 Business Plan

7. A contribution of £150,000 is sought from CNPA towards the 2008/09 Business Plan. The Expenditure Justification for this work is shown in **Annex 1**, the Draft Business Plan in **Annex 2** and the Breakdown of Projects in **Annex 3**.

Recommendation

8. **It is recommended that the Board:**
- a) **Approves a contribution of £150,000 towards the delivery of the Trust's 2008/09 business plan.**

Policy Context

Delivering Sustainability

9. The Trust will help deliver the key actions contained in the National Park Plan and the Outdoor Access Strategy. Both of these documents have been subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment and consultation. The activities of the Trust should also help the National Park become more socially and economically sustainable through providing more quality opportunities to get out and about the Park.

Delivering A Park for All

10. The path works proposed in and around communities will make more of the National Park accessible to a wider range of people, from a wider range of economic and social backgrounds. Access to the outdoors is free.

Delivering Economy, Effectiveness and Efficiency

11. The Trust has already been assessed as the most effective means of delivering a broad range of the actions contained in the Priority for Action in the Park Plan.

Implications

Financial Implications

12. In terms of finances, the potential risk and liability to the CNPA is limited to the annual funding given.
13. On a wider note of risk management, when the Board were asked to consider the principle of the development of an Outdoor Access Trust, officers highlighted that there would be significant reputational risk to the Authority in working with existing partners in the creation of a Park-wide Trust and subsequently not funding the Trust at a material or meaningful level.
14. The Trust is seeking a contribution of £150,000 towards the full cost of the Business Plan which amount to £227,500.
15. While this is a relatively large contribution from the Authority, this does mean that for every £2 invested in development of Outdoor Access infrastructure we are, through the work of the Trust, leveraging at least another £1 into the Park. This is anticipated to be a minimum level as the Trust will continue to seek additional project funding over the course of the year. Officers also hope that the level of additional funds for outdoor access levered into the National Park through the Trust increases with time.

Presentational Implications

16. The establishment of the one Trust, working across the whole of the Park, and which will help partners come together to achieve improvements is a “good news” story for everyone. Funding outdoor access infrastructure and the other aspects of work within the current Business Plan will result in better recreational and community infrastructure throughout the National Park. The early survey work that is planned will also provide a demonstration of the long term commitment to this important aspect of such works within the National Park.

Implications for Stakeholders

17. There are four main stakeholder groups who will be affected by these proposals:
 - a) Communities – the expanded Trust will now start to deliver works beyond Upper Deeside and will demonstrate a commitment to ensuring high quality opportunities for access will become a reality on the ground. This will be important to build confidence in both the Core Paths Planning process and the recent survey work undertaken on upland paths. The Trust will wish to work in support of locally based community groups where these are in place and to support the development of new ones where appropriate.

- b) The Trust – the nominations of Trustees from the CNPA will indicate the desire to see works taking place all across the National Park and confirm our commitment to the work of the Trust through the funding being offered.
- c) Land Managers – for land managers in those parts of the National Park not covered by UDAT there has not been a vehicle to readily address access infrastructure problems. This is now in place and should help land managers proactively integrate access with land management activities.
- d) Funding partners – There is now a good mechanism in place for a wide range of funding partners to come together and demonstrate their commitment to the National Park by investing in the provision of a wide range of benefits – including people’s enjoyment of the Park, health, sustainable transport, tourism, community development and so on.

Next Steps

18. On the basis that the above recommendations are approved the next steps will be to:
- a) Notify the Trust of the CNPA nominees; and
 - b) Confirm the funding to help deliver the 2008/09 Business Plan.

Bob Grant

May 2008

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Annex 1

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
EXPENDITURE JUSTIFICATION

1. Title

Developing a programme of access improvements across the Cairngorms Natinal Park
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2. Expenditure Category

Operational		Code	74104000	Project	
(goal description)				Grant	✓
Core or Project spend		Code	1d	Consultancy	

Is this spend to be funded from an existing budget line, existing line with additional funds or is it a totally new spend?	£ 150,000	Existing budget	✓
	£	Additional budget	
	£	New budget	

delete as appropriate

3. Description

- Brief overview of project/activity including cost summary
- Specific elements for which support is sought (if not whole project/activity)

Summary

- a) The Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust is seeking £150,000 support from CNPA towards an agreed programme of works for the 2008/09 financial year. The total value of the programme amounts to £227,500

Background

- b) The Upper Deeside Access Trust has been delivering a wide range of path projects and other access related work over the last 10 years. The Upper Deeside Trust however has now evolved into the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust from 1 April 2008 and consequently has a much wider geographical spread and has to build up a range of projects that it will be able to tackle over the forthcoming years.
- c) The Draft Business Plan is shown in Annex 2 and highlights the key aspects of work that will be tackled and the funding that has been attracted from partners. This first year of work will focus heavily on putting together projects and funding partnerships to deliver them in the subsequent two years. As such this first year should be viewed as an essential year of project development with some delivery which will emphasise working throughout the National Park.

4. Rationale and Strategic Fit

- Objectives/intended beneficiaries
- Evidence of need and demand
- Fit with National Park Plan/Corporate Plan/other relevant strategies
- Linkages to other activities/projects

- a) The range of work planned provides a mix of both low ground delivery, including a new bridge in Kingussie, high ground survey, project development, signage and interpretation and continued investment in existing health walk schemes. The low ground work planned in Strathdon and Kingussie reflects the views expressed by the communities through the Core Paths Planning consultations. Improving path provision will enable people of all ages and abilities to enjoy the special qualities of the Park and, for the upland areas, help protect fragile plant communities from pressures arising from outdoor access. These are both strategic objectives within the draft Park Plan. In addition, the Outdoor Access Strategy has policies that seek to improve the path provision and quality and seeks greater provision for people of all abilities and multi-use. The health related walks in the Strathdon and Deeside areas to the work being delivered by COAT has a further close tie with the policy objectives within the Outdoor Access Strategy. The proposed programme has therefore a very close fit with the strategy for the Park.
- b) The identification of works within the COAT programme has stemmed from consideration of the Outdoor Access Strategy and broad consultation with stakeholders and through area wide audit and assessment processes.

5. Option Analysis

- Are there other ways in which the above objectives could be achieved?
- If so, why is this the preferred option?

- a) The management of this overall programme of works by a single body provides a coordinated and cost effective approach to delivering a diverse range of individual projects. It would be possible in some instances to have elements of the programme taken forward as single, stand alone projects developed through individual initiatives and led by communities where this capacity exists. Such an approach would involve a much greater degree of management and involvement from potential funders, as there would not be the level of project management experience, quality control and contract supervision that can be assured through COAT. For all these reasons, it is felt that the most appropriate means of delivery is through COAT.

6. Risk Assessment

- Are there risks to the CNPA in funding this project/activity?
- Are there risks in the project/activity not being delivered to required timescale/quality?

- Comment on the likelihood of such risks occurring, their potential impact, and (where appropriate) any action that would be taken to mitigate the risks.

- a) The risks to CNPA of funding this programme are very low. COAT, whilst a new body, have staff who have considerable experience of handling a diverse annual programme of works of this magnitude and content. Much of the work in the current year is project development and consequently there are fewer risks than have been the case in previous years. The main risk is in relation to partnership funding, however all other funding sources have been agreed which includes Aberdeenshire Council, SNH, Paths to Health, NHS Grampian, private estates and reserves already in place from the predecessor organisation.
- b) Statutory and other permissions have yet to be obtained for the bridge works and negotiations have now commenced with the relevant landowners concerned. Verbal approval has been given from the landowner in relation to the bridge and other works have been highlighted to landowners with no adverse reaction. It is not anticipated that approvals will prove problematical.
- c) Financial risks have also been considered as COAT operates with limited reserves but cash flow projections have been considered and are based on funding streams being delivered at agreed times.

7. Costs and Funding

- Detail the financial costs of the project/activity
- Detail the sources of funding
- Justification also needs to be given if the CNPA is the major funder
- Detail any non-monetary costs to the CNPA (such as Member or staff input)

- a) The total value of the programme is £227,500 and therefore there is a funding shortfall of £9,500. To demonstrate their commitment to ensuring this programme can be delivered the Trustees have confirmed that they will meet any shortfall from reserves.

CNPA	150,000
Aberdeenshire Council	15,000
SNH	20,000
Paths to Health	5,000
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8. Funding conditions

- Detail the project specific conditions that need to be included in any contract for services or grant offer letter in order that CNPA obtains the intended outcomes and Value for Money
- In the case of grant offers, our Financial Memorandum requires that SEERAD agree these conditions in advance of the grant offer being made

- a) Further discussions are required about cash flow for the Trust. In addition to the

standard conditions, the offer letter would be likely to indicate that 80% of the CNPA contribution will be paid on 30 September (£120,000) with the balance paid on 1 March 2009 (£30,000). Both payments will be conditional on progress with and delivery of the Business Plan.

9. Deliverables/ Impact Assessment

- What end products/outputs will be delivered?
- How will success be measured?
- How will the project be monitored and what will be the feedback to the CNPA?

- a) The access infrastructure products will result in improved access opportunities. Combined, they will enhance the range of opportunities that already exist in the area and will make a positive contribution to both local and visitor experience within the Park.
- b) Use of the new facilities and continued uptake of the paths to health schemes will be the key measures of success.
- c) The monitoring of all path and other projects is undertaken through the COAT Management Group. CNPA is represented on this group by Bob Grant, Senior Outdoor Access Officer. Progress reports, including financial monitoring are presented to this group quarterly. The Management Group have responsibility for recommending changes to the work programme, noting that such changes require ratifying by the COAT Board of Directors, of which two will be CNPA representatives.

10. Value for Money

- In view of the costs, do the deliverables appear to offer value for money? (consider cost of comparable projects, where available).

- a) COAT's predecessor, the Upper Deeside Access Trust has proved to be effective at delivering access related projects. Delivery through an established Trust provides an efficient mechanism to deliver a broad programme of works. Delivering such works on a project by project basis would require considerably more staff time and would prove harder to ensure a consistent, high quality output.
- b) The CNPA contribution to the overall programme is 66% of total budget. This is high but reflects the difficulty in securing partner funding in the current operational year. Early indications from funders is that resources will be less tight next year and the development of a number of projects within the current Business Plan will also secure funding for their delivery.
- c) The programme of works provides good value for money by delivery being undertaken through a single organisation with a recognised pedigree for delivering high quality work timeously.

11. Exit or Continuation Arrangements (where applicable)

- If this is not a discrete, time-limited, project or piece of work, what are the exit/continuation arrangements for when CNPA support ceases?

a) This is a one year offer of funding. Future funding will be dependant on a Business Plan being developed and agreed for future years.

12. Additionality

- Does this work/project substitute for or duplicate work being carried out or proposed by others?
- What would be the effects of the CNPA not supporting the project? Would it proceed without CNPA support?

- a) The proposed work programme does not duplicate or impinge on other projects.
- b) CNPA's contribution is essential to allow the full programme of works be delivered. Without it, the programme would have to be seriously curtailed. As much of the programme is staff intensive due to surveying, any shortfall in the CNPA contribution would have a serious impact on the development of future works.
- c) Overall the Authority will be making contributions which allows COAT 2008/09 programme to be delivered.

13. Stakeholder Support

- Have the organisations and/or communities that would have an interest in this work/project been involved, and are they supportive?
- If supporter are also not funders an explanation may be required.

a) There is support from existing funders (47 affiliated organizations): all of who are kept informed through updates at the AGM and representation on the management group.

14. Recommendation

a) It is recommended that a grant be offered from CNPA amounting to £150,000.

Annex 2

CAIRNGORMS OUTDOOR ACCESS TRUST

Draft Business Plan 2008 /09

Introduction

Background

1. The Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust is a development of the Upper Deeside Access Trust model for delivering outdoor access related projects, operating on a National Park scale. The organisation will come into existence in April 2008 and be governed by an expanded Board of Directors of the current Upper Deeside Access Trust.
2. The objectives of the Trust are as follows:
 - a) to conserve and protect, for the benefit of the public, the natural heritage and environment of the Area by encouraging, developing and implementing a strategy for the management of access in the Area which integrates the needs of land managers, access users, the local community and the natural heritage;
 - b) to facilitate and maintain public access to the Area whilst at the same time encouraging a sensitive and planned approach to recreational use therein and access thereto which is sympathetic to and compatible with the natural heritage of the area;
 - c) to advance the education of the general public in the natural heritage of the Area, including but not limited to the flora and fauna and environmental and land management aspects of the Area, and also in the appropriate and sensitive use of and access to the Area;
 - d) to promote the public and individual health benefits of the enjoyment of outdoor access within the Area.

Scope of the Business Plan

3. This draft business plan lays out the recommended activity in the 2008/9 period. Whilst it could be considered unusual to have a one year business plan, a number of factors lend themselves to this, including the transition of the organisation to COAT, the levels of funding likely to be committed in this financial year and the likely availability of external funding programmes to become available in the coming months.
4. The intention is to create a second business plan during the year as future levels of partner funding are indicated, and a strategic way forward with targeting project activity across the length and breadth of the Park is developed. Path networks around communities will in particular benefit from the Core Paths Plan becoming finalised, and priorities set through working with community groups. It should also be noted that the proposed pan-Cairngorms upland path project will likely require a five year business plan.

5. The business plan does provide the platform to develop projects to deliver the objectives outlined by the Core Paths Plan and the Outdoor Access Strategy, and this is on the whole likely to best be realised through the development of projects and through securing external grant to match up with COAT funding. It also covers the aftercare for past UDAT works through maintenance of upland and lowland work.
6. The year ought to be viewed as one of protecting the past achievements of UDAT and future development of COATs objectives across the area of the Park. The Trust has the capacity to work up a number of projects across the range of activity, and most of these are suitable for external grants from current and emerging grant awarding bodies. The bulk of the work required on these will therefore consist of technical, management, planning and consultation and this would be best carried out by in-house staff.
7. The areas identified for development are
 - a) Path networks around communities
 - b) Mountain paths and strategic routes
 - c) Associated visitor infrastructure
 - d) Promotion and marketing
 - e) Health and Wellbeing

Path Networks Around Communities

Background

8. The Cairngorms National Park Core Path Plan identifies and designates networks of core paths, whereby everyone can enjoy the outdoors responsibly. The vast majority of routes are in the low ground, and located around local communities. Path networks should be available to everyone resident or visiting the Park as a means to experience the outdoors first hand. They need to cater for a wide range of users and should also provide opportunities for those who do not have access to, or wish to use, private motor vehicles. In this way paths can also contribute to more healthy lifestyles, meet social inclusion objectives and reduce carbon emissions.
9. Sustaining and developing path networks in, around and between communities is a key priority in the coming years. Much good work has been done but there are communities in some parts of the National Park that do not have high quality path networks that are easy to use on their doorsteps. The Trust aims to develop a range of community based network projects across the National Park in the coming years, developing the routes that have been identified and where necessary developing them to fit local and national aspirations. The community networks have been identified for the first year of operation, and these are listed below. In future years the Trust will aim to develop paths around communities, with a range of projects likely to be worked up each year with a park-wide spread. In time the Trust should have developed networks over all of the local communities in this way. The Trust will interface with Communities through local access groups, with one already established in Deeside, and another to be formed covering Strathspey during 2008.

Community Path Projects

10. COATs involvement in this process ought to be one of engagement with communities to deliver their aspirations through externally funded projects. It will not be possible to work in all areas of the park all of the time, and the best way forward will be to target discreet community groups each year. Strathdon, Tarland and Kingussie community groups have been identified as the best projects to work up this coming year.
- a) *Strathdon* will likely require three paths to be upgraded and a collapsed bridge to be replaced. COAT intends to engage with the community group in April, work up design and costings in May and June, and raise grant applications to the Cairngorms LEADER programme and/or SRDP. One of the routes would be worth approaching 'Safe Routes to School' for possible sources of funding. If the application is successful it should be possible to deliver contract works towards the end of the year. This would be a good opportunity for COAT to demonstrate its ability to access grant and deliver high quality work out with the Upper Deeside area.
 - b) *Tarland* looks likely to consist of one multi-user path, one cycle way, and one pedestrian path that ought to be sectioned off from cattle. The project will likely be funded through Aberdeenshire LEADER and/or SRDP and represents a good opportunity to deliver a project that links to the park from one of the peripheral areas.
 - c) *Kingussie* requires a replacement bridge to be built. The community group have already raised some money, and the Cairngorms LEADER and/or SRDP would be the best source for external grant. This would provide an excellent opportunity for COAT to engage with a community group on the western side of the park.
 - d) *Maintenance* will be required for paths around communities that have been built by UDAT. Survey work will be compiled, works prioritised with contracts let and supervised throughout the year.
11. Contingency ought to be considered in case for any reason there are insurmountable difficulties or delays in the identified networks, and consideration would be made to develop a network in another location in liaison with the CNPA access staff and the access groups.

Mountain paths and strategic routes

Background

12. The Cairngorms National Park Outdoor Access Strategy identifies the necessity of a consistent approach across the park in addressing upland path erosion repair. The sensitive natural habitats and landscapes of the mountains are under continuing pressure from visitors. Work is required to ensure that these underpinning features of the National Park are not irrevocably damaged. Sensitive repair and management of damaged areas will secure the resource and minimise the human impact, whilst allowing tourism businesses to develop in a sustainable fashion. Strategic routes (e.g. the Speyside Way) provide visitors with opportunities for personal journeys through the Park and potentially have a key role to play in encouraging high value visitors to the area

13. Whilst a great deal of work has been done in the past, in particular by UDAT, NTS and HIE, there are paths that have not yet received the benefit of this type of work. The upland path priorities workshop will enable us to develop a list of paths that should be surveyed. These routes will be surveyed to provide priorities and costs for a major upland path project to be carried out in future years.

Cairngorms Upland Path Priorities Assessment

14. An exercise has been undertaken to collate data about use and condition of upland paths throughout the National Park. That information was presented and discussed at a workshop of relevant individuals and organisations during March 2008. From the workshop, a prioritised list of paths that require intervention was developed.

Pan Cairngorms Upland Path Project

15. These paths would be best compiled into a pan-Cairngorms upland path project requiring external funding, most likely from Heritage Lottery Fund and/or SRDP. This will provide an excellent opportunity for COAT to demonstrate ability to deliver high quality upland path work across the whole area of the park. This will be a large project and would be best delivered over 5 years, due to the shortage of the season to work at high altitude and likely availability of specialised contract teams. UDAT had good experience of this type of activity through the development and delivery of the East Cairngorms Access Project, and it is intended to carry forward the lessons learnt from this.
16. The identified paths will have to be surveyed thoroughly in the coming months to produce an assessment of path condition with design issues, management constraints and full costings.

Maintenance

17. A good deal of upland path work was carried out by UDAT through ECAP and other initiatives. These will require ongoing maintenance this year, with a full survey on maintenance requirements to produce specification and tender the work later on this year. It was noteworthy at the upland path workshop that HIE and NTS vocally expressed their concerns over maintenance of upland routes, and they may be interested in sharing resources in future years.

Speyside Way Extension

18. The extension to the Speyside Way from Aviemore to Newtonmore has been a long term aspiration and it is anticipated that Ministerial approval to extend the route should be received in late 2008. Detailed negotiations with land owners can only commence after Ministerial approval has been given. COAT will however be in a good position to push on with providing a detailed survey and specification fit for a wide range of uses over its length once approval is in place.

Associated visitor infrastructure

19. Provision of high quality infrastructure – such as car park improvements, countryside furniture and interpretation boards – is a powerful visitor management tool, as has

clearly been demonstrated at the Spittal of Glen Muick. There is a good deal of this type of infrastructure across the park, though some areas are not as well served as others. Standards of infrastructure vary quite widely across the area and it is the Trust's intention to work with CNPA access staff to develop generic standards that can be adopted the park.

20. Much of the work planned in the next three years builds on path developments already undertaken, the popularity of which has necessitated supporting infrastructure. This year it is proposed to provide a full design and specification to replace existing interpretive boards in Braemar and to cost the requirements to ensure all core paths are appropriately sign posted and waymarked.

Promotion, marketing and development of business opportunities to generate sustainable economic benefits

21. Some very good path networks already exist throughout the Cairngorms National Park but to maximise their potential, better information needs to be provided. It has been shown that there are significant tourism business opportunities arising from well promoted networks.
22. This year COAT will work with communities to develop appropriate path leaflets as defined through the Outdoor Access Strategy, and revamp both Ballater and Braemar leaflets as part of pilot for National Park style leaflets. The website will also be changed from UDAT to COAT, and there is scope for marketing web-links with local businesses that ought to be investigated further.

Health and wellbeing

23. Scotland continues to have the worst health record in Western Europe and this area of work has been shown to assist significantly in helping Scotland to become more active. Studies have shown that regular exercise can reduce the risk of heart attack, stroke and diabetes and there is increasing evidence that exercise has significant mental health benefits. The greatest health gain is derived from people who change from being sedentary to undertaking moderate exercise regularly each week. An issue particular to rural locations is of geographic isolation and an ageing population. It can be very difficult for elderly people to access the countryside as they lose the ability to drive, or have access to a car. At present some parts of the National Park have access to health promotion schemes but other areas are lacking such support.
24. This year COAT will continue to provide a co-ordinating role for health walk schemes in Deeside and Donside, liaise with Health Board throughout the National Park to encourage active referrals from GPs and work with partners to develop proposals for health walk schemes in other parts of the Park.

Funding

25. This looks likely to be a difficult year for public funding with expected support to COAT summarised below.

CNPA	150,000
Aberdeenshire Council	15,000
SNH	20,000
Paths to Health	5,000
NHS Grampian	2,000
Funding generated by COAT	26,000
	£218,000

26. There is a projected shortfall at present between income and projected expenditure of some £9,500. This will certainly be ameliorated with the successful raising of externally funded projects with paths around communities. The SRDP and LEADER funding programmes may be new, but the strategic fit is good between COATs activity and the funding objectives and should be in an excellent position to take up grant for these projects.
27. The shortfall will have to be guaranteed in the short term by the Company reserve, and it is important to recognise there will be opportunities, in time, to raise funds from:
- a) Bequests and other charitable donations
 - b) Proceeds from sales of publications, posters, etc
 - c) Car park charging revenue

April 2008

ANNEX 3: Breakdown of projects for 2008/09

Activity	Staff Time	Contract Costs	External Grant
Path Networks around communities			
Develop Strathdon community path project:			
<i>a. Community consultation; grant raising claims and administration, publicity</i>	20		
<i>b. Path specification; planning consent; contract management</i>	40		
<i>c. Consultant engineer for design and supervision of bridge</i>		£2,000	
<i>d. COAT Project Match Funding</i>		£15,000	£65,000
Develop Tarland community path project:			
<i>a. Community consultation; grant raising claims and administration, publicity</i>	20		
<i>b. Path specification; planning consent; contract management</i>	30		
<i>c. COAT Project Match Funding</i>		£10,000	£50,000
Develop Kingussie community bridge project	20	£5,000	£19,000
Continue to maintain paths already upgraded.	30	£15,000	
Mountain paths and strategic routes			
Develop Pan-Cairngorms Upland Path Project			
<i>a. Survey Upland Paths identified through the Upland Path Assessment Priorities Workshop, and compile into path condition report with condition assessment, path context, design and outline costings for each route.</i>	80		
<i>b. Negotiate with Landowners and other partnership organisations, prepare project brief, grant applications, business plan and secure match funding.</i>	40		
Develop and implement solutions for ongoing path maintenance and low key repairs;	40	£5,000	

Activity	Staff Time	Contract Costs	External Grant
Complete path specification for the Speyside Way extension	30		
Continue to maintain paths already upgraded by UDAT.	30	£15,000	
Associated visitor infrastructure			
Provide design and specification to replace existing interpretive boards in Braemar	20		
Cost the requirements to ensure all core paths are appropriately sign posted and way-marked.	30		
Promotion, marketing and development of business opportunities			
Work with communities to develop appropriate path leaflets as defined through Outdoor Access Strategy ;	30	£5,000	
Develop web sites and evaluate potential marketing of web links	10	£6,000	
Revamp both Ballater and Braemar leaflets as a pilot for a Park-wide style.	20	£1,000	
Health and wellbeing			
Continue to provide a co-ordinating role for health walk schemes in Deeside and Donside;	70	£1,000	
Liaise with Health Board throughout the National Park to encourage active referrals from GPs;	10		
Work with partners to develop proposals for health walk schemes in other parts of the Park;	20		
	590		
Operating costs (includes 1.6FTE Access Officer, Trust Manager, Health Walks Coordinator and Trust Administrator)	£147,500	£80,000	£134,000
COAT Costs		£227,500	