

# CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

## EXPENDITURE JUSTIFICATION/(PROJECT PROPOSAL)

### 1. Title

Funding for the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust's Business Plan 2011/15

### 2. Expenditure Category

Operational Plan		Code	74104000	Procurement	
Programme:				Grant	√
Core or Project spend		Code	Id	Capital	

Is this spend to be funded from an existing budget line, existing line with additional funds or is it a totally new spend?	£85,000	Existing budget	√
	£	Additional budget	
	£	New budget	

### 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 £85,000 from CNPA towards delivering the first year of the business plan covering 2011/15. £100,000 has already been approved by the CNPA Board in September 2010. The total value of the four year programme amounts to £3,649,260 of which £707,000 will be incurred in 2011/12.

#### Background

b) The Cairngorms Access Trust has now been operating for 3 years and has fast built up a successful record of delivering access infrastructure, visitor information and increasing the range of health walks available in the National Park. This Plan builds on these successes. The Draft Business Plan is shown in Annex 1 and highlights the key aspects of work that will be tackled and the funding that has been, or is likely to be attracted from partners. The work focuses heavily on delivering path improvements coming out of the core paths planning process and from the prioritised programme of upland path repairs.

### 4. Rationale and Strategic Fit

- Why is the Park Authority considering investing staff and/ or financial resources in this project?
- Objectives/intended beneficiaries
- Evidence of need and demand
- Why is the Park Authority considering investing

- Fit with National Park Plan/Corporate Plan/other relevant strategies
- Linkages to other activities/projects
- What contribution may be made to improving KPI's?

- a) The range of work planned provides a mix of both low and high ground delivery, signage, interpretation and continued investment in health walk schemes.
- b) The low ground work planned reflects the views expressed by 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. 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. In relation to mountain path repairs, this will help enhance landscape, protect wild land qualities and protect fragile plant communities from pressures arising from outdoor access. The Trust has expanded health walk schemes into new communities over the last two years and further expansion is planned with more consistent integration with health professionals. This latter work provides a close link to Scottish Government targets on health and social inclusion.

## 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 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 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. In addition, a small organisation provides flexibility in adapting to new projects and challenges and can be opportunistic in seeking support. For all these reasons, it is felt that the best means of delivery is through COAT.

## 6. Risk Assessment

- Strategic, Organisational Risks: Does the project assist in managing or reducing any of the strategic risks identified by the Audit Committee or Management Team? Please reference the Strategic Risk Register and specify which risks are addressed through the project and how these risks are addressed.
- Project Risks: 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 low but are dependent on the other funders coming on stream. Funding has been secured from SNH, HIE, RSPB, SMT,

HIPP, HLF Aberdeenshire Council and NHS Grampian. The remaining uncertainty rests with Cairngorm LEADER and a decision is expected on their funding before the end of March 2011. There does remain some doubt as to whether they will fund to the full amount asked and any reduction will have an impact on the level of match funding being offered by bodies such as SNH and consequent impact on the total work that can be delivered in the year.

- b) Staff turnover in a small organisation is a potential risk and one project officer has left in the last year. Experience from that departure and subsequent recruitment would indicate that turnover of this nature is manageable with no adverse impact on delivery. Having two access project officers does also help to mitigate this risk by providing additional cover in the event of either the Manager or the other access project officer leaving.
- c) Financial risks through potential cashflow problems have also been considered as COAT operates with limited reserves. In particular as the larger projects come on line there is the possibility of funds being required at an early stage. This risk has been managed through approval of CNPA finance committee to front load the contribution. SNH have agreed to do the same.

## 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)

Costed areas of work are shown below.

<b>Project costs and Areas of activity</b>	<b>2011/12</b>
<b><i>Upland Paths</i></b>	
Cairngorms Mountain Heritage (Highlands)	450,000
Maintain Upland paths	50,000
	<u>500,000</u>
<b><i>Community Network Paths</i></b>	
Path Construction	120,000
Maintain Lowland Paths	17,000
	<u>137,000</u>
<b><i>Walking To Health Project</i></b>	50000
<b><i>Promotion, marketing and development</i></b>	20,000
Maintain Speyside Way (contract costs)	15,000
	<u>707,000</u>
<b>Project Costs</b>	<b>707,000</b>
<b>Running Costs</b>	241,408
	<u><u>948,408</u></u>
<b>Income (Yr 1)</b>	
Cairngorms National Park Authority	£185,000
CNPA Speyside Way Mgt & maint.	£22,000
Highlands and Islands Enterprise	£32,500
COAT Income (Sales and Consultancy)	£65,000
Scottish Natural Heritage	£65,000
Deeside Way Consultancy Costs	£16,440
RSPB	£8,000
SMT	£2,500
HIPP (CMH High)	£205,834

HLF (CMH High)	£130,634
Aberdeenshire Council	£10,000
LEADER (Comm Paths + WTH)	£143,000
Paths To Health (WTH Only)	£6,250
National Trust for Scotland	£21,250
NHS Highland and Grampian	£10,000
Charitable Trusts + Donations	£25,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£948,408</b>

### 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) A quarterly report on progress must be produced for the COAT Management Group showing progress against all path works, visitor information and number of health walks, volunteers and participants.

### 9. Deliverables/ Impact Assessment including Equalities

- Could the project have any discriminatory or negative effects on particular groups?
- Have opportunities been taken to promote equality within the project design?
- Does the project fall within one of the Park Authorities priority areas for considering equality impacts?
- 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 for all. Combined, they will enhance the range of opportunities that already exist in the National Park and will make a positive contribution to both local and visitor experiences within the Park.
- b) The upland path project will help protect the wild land qualities and natural heritage of the mountain areas. 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 both by COAT Directors, two of which are CNPA representatives, and through the COAT Management Group. CNPA is represented on this latter 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.

## 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) Delivery through an established Trust has proved to be an effective and 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 20% of total budget. This represents very good leverage for the CNPA contribution and demonstrates year on year progress.
- 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 single year offer of funding (albeit a commitment has already been made to the mountain path project for a further 3 years at £50,000 per annum). Future funding will be dependent on future levels of grant in aid from Scottish Government and continued satisfactory delivery of the current Business Plan and any future plan which will require to be closely tied into the priorities identified in the current National Park Plan and emerging through the next National Park Plan.

## 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 to be delivered. Without it, the programme would have to be curtailed and it is unlikely that other funders would be willing to support if CNPA did not contribute to this key areas of work. At best the scale of works would be seriously diminished and some aspects would not be able to go ahead.

## 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) Support has been demonstrated for the low ground work through the core paths planning consultation process and for the high ground work through engagement with land managers and parties interested in upland path repairs. In addition, COAT's Annual General Meeting appoints two affiliate members from communities in the east and west of the National Park who also influence the work through being members of the Management Group.

#### **14. Recommendation**

**It is recommended that a grant be offered from CNPA amounting to £85,000**

Name: Bob Grant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**15. Decision to Approve or Reject**

**Head of Group**

Name: Murray Ferguson

Signature:

Date:

**Head of Corporate Services**

Name: David Cameron

Signature:

Date:

**Chief Executive**

Name: Jane Hope

Signature:

Date:

**Finance Committee**

Name:

Signature:

Date:

**Board**

Not applicable – below approval limits

Name:

Signature:

Date:

**Scottish Government**

Not applicable – below approval limits

Name:

Signature:

Date: