## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

### EXPENDITURE JUSTIFICATION

## 1. Title

| Visitor Survey 2009/10 |
|---|

## 2. Expenditure Category

| Operational Plan | x | Code | | Project | ✓ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (goal description) | | | | Grant | |
| Core or Project spend | | Code | | Consultancy | |

| Is this spend to be funded from an existing budget line, existing line with additional funds or is it a totally new spend? | £48 000 | Existing budget | ✓ |
|---|---|---|---|
| | £ | Additional | |
| | £ | 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)

In 2003/04 CNPA commissioned a year-long, Park-wide visitor survey, which informed the 2006 State of the Park report and has played an important role in policy development since.  A repeat of the survey is planned to run from April 2009 to March 2010.  This will remain substantially the same as the original baseline survey and will contribute significantly to work on monitoring progress on delivery since National Park designation.

The initial survey consisted of 2,500 face-to-face interviews at a variety of locations.  Additionally, 1076 self-completion questionnaires were returned.  However, the self-completion data varied quite significantly from the face-to-face interviews and, being less robust data, this has been used for very little.  It is not anticipated that self-completion questionnaires will be used in the 2009/10 survey.

Full costs will become clear after the delivery of the survey has been

tendered but it is estimated that costs for the Cairngorms survey will be in the region of £48 000.

## 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

The key objectives of this piece of work are:

> To give detailed information about visitor behavior, motivation and spend for use in monitoring progress against both the National Park Plan and the Sustainable Tourism Strategy.

> To allow comparison with both the 2003/04 survey, and the LLTNP survey to identify key visitor trends.

> To enable the private sector within the National Park to make informed decisions about business development.

The visitor survey is a crucial element of Park Plan Monitoring, I particular against the following 5-year outcomes:

**Making Tourism & Business More Sustainable**

6.5 ii The visitor experience in the National Park will consistently exceed expectations and will drive repeat visits / more business opportunities. The Park will compare well against the rest of Scotland and other National Parks.

**Raising Awareness & Understanding of the Park**

6.7 I More people across Scotland will be more aware of the National Park, what makes it special and the opportunities it offers them.

6.7 ii Residents and visitors will appreciate the special qualities of the Park and understand more about their special management needs.

6.7 iii Everyone will know when they have arrived in the National Park and have a positive feeling about arriving in a special place.

6.7 iv More people who have visited the Park will have high quality experiences and will tell positive stories about the area.

## 5. Option Analysis

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

It would be impossible to meet the objectives above without commissioning some form of primary research.  In terms of reducing the cost of the survey there are two potential options and these are detailed below.

> ➤  Reduce the sample size from 2,500.  However, given the size of the National Park, any significant decrease in the sample size is likely to reduce the statistical significance of the data, especially when broken down to demographic subgroups.

> ➤  Using wholly self-completion questionnaires rather than face-to-face interviews.  However, data from the 2003/04 report shows that this significantly skews the data. For example, self-completion respondents were twice as likely as face-to-face interviewees to be members of organisations such as RSPB and NTS.

There is therefore a strong argument for undertaking face-to-face interviews as in the previous survey.  Advice will be sought from the successful contractor on the advisability of reducing the ample size to reduce costs.

## 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.

The risks to the CNPA in funding this project relate largely to the competence of the contractor awarded the work.  A full tendering process will assess the skills and experience of contractors and this will be taken into consideration when awarding the contract.  Payment for the work shall be scheduled such that final payment will be due only after successful completion of the project.

## 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)

Until tender documents are received, it is impossible to give fixed costs. The costs below are based on 2003/04 survey costs (plus inflation) , with the following exceptions:

- ➢ There was an initial cost of around £10 000 to develop and test the questions making up the survey.  As the questions should remain largely the same, this cost will not be incurred.

- ➢ Removing the printing, distribution, postage and analysis of self-completion questionnaires will save around £9 000.

- ➢ Consideration will need to be given to the proposed Perthshire boundary change.  This may mean gathering additional data for this area which is disregarded in comparisons with 2003/04 data but can provide a baseline for future years.

- ➢ The charge for data entry in the 2003/04 survey may be negated by changes in technology, such as the use of handheld electronic devices to gather data.

Estimated costs:

Project Development:             £1,000

2500 Face to Face interviews:    £35,000

Data Entry:                  £4,000

Analysis & Reporting:            £4,000

Expenses:                  £4,000

**Total**                  **£48,000**

All costs are inclusive of VAT.

In terms of timescale, it is likely that around 70% of the funding would be paid in financial year 2009/10, with the remaining 30% paid on completion of the final reports in 2010/11.

It is likely that CNPA will have to fund the vast majority, perhaps all, of

the work. However efforts to find other sources of support are ongoing.

Input from CNPA staff will be required, particularly in advance of the survey to agree the detail of the questions and particular methodology used. During the course of the survey it is anticipated that very little CNPA staff time would be required.

## 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

N/a

## 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?

The project output will be a survey report detailing the key visitor statistics for the Cairngorms and comparison with the 2003/04 survey to identify key trends. Success will be measured by the successful submission of the reports in 2010. CNPA is the lead partner on the project and will be involved in the project at all stages.

## 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).

The costs are likely to be comparable to the 2003/04 visitor survey. A full tender process will determine the best value contractors for the project.

## 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?

The 2009/10 survey is a discrete project in itself.  However ongoing data gathering will be necessary as part of Park Plan monitoring.  It is anticipated that this will be at 5 or 6 yearly intervals.

## 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 variety of other relevant research, detailed below, is also carried out but none of this will provide the sort of statistically significant repeat data that would be produced by the visitor survey.

STEAM data is gathered annually on the volume and value of tourism to the local economy broken down by month.  This data complements the visitor survey, allowing us to build a fuller picture of visitor trends.

A pilot project, DOVE (delivering outstanding visitor experience), has recently taken place in the Highlands.  Supported by HIE and involving DMOs, the project has gathered customer feedback using a hand-held electronic device.  It is hoped that this project will continue on a park-wide basis in 2009.  This will allow detailed data on visitor experience to be gathered.  Again this information will complement the visitor survey but could not replace it.

VisitScotland have in the past conducted regional visitor surveys, including one for the Highlands in 2002, but currently do not have funding to do so.  They hope to receive European funding in the next few years to undertake a major Scotland-wide survey.  However funding has not been secured, and the survey would not follow the format of the CNP baseline survey so VisitScotland's research team advise that CNPA undertake the repeat Visitor Survey in 2009/10.

If CNPA were not to support the project, it would not 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.

Partner organisations have been supportive but for a variety of reasons are unlikely to be in a position to contribute funds to the project.  Work to secure partner funding is ongoing.

## 14. Recommendation

It is recommended that CNPA allocate £48 000 to carry out this piece of work.

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____ _____

## 15. Decision to Approve or Reject

### Head of Group

Name:                        Signature:                        Date:

### Chief Executive

Name:                        Signature:                        Date:

### Management Team

Name:                        Signature:                        Date:

### Finance Committee

Name:                        Signature:                        Date:

### Board

Not applicable – below approval limits

| Name: | Signature: | Date: |
|---|---|---|

**SEERAD**

Not applicable – below approval limits

| Name: | Signature: | Date: |
|---|---|---|