
**CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
FINANCE COMMITTEE**

FOR DECISION

Title: Cairngorms Explorer

Prepared by: John Thorne, Economic Development Officer

Purpose

To seek the committee's approval for funding of Cairngorms Explorer Year 5:
2009/10

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to approve that the project spend:

2008/9	£20,000
2009/10	£ 6,965

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Expenditure Justification

1. Title CAIRNGORMS EXPLORER YEAR 5: 2009/10

2. Expenditure Category

Operational Plan	✓	Code	8190301	Project	✓
19 – Improved Accessibility & Quality of Public Transport within the Park				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?	£26,965	Existing	✓
	£	Add. budget	
	£	New budget	

3. Description

The Cairngorms Explorer (CE) is the combined passenger transport information brochure for the Park. Its role is to highlight available alternatives to car use, and to link public transport to walks, cycling routes and affordable days out. It was first published in 2005 and has been repeated annually. It was well received by both the public and transport users, with the highest (83%) satisfaction score of any Park publication. Combining timetables and walks/cycle rides, it presented for the first time travel information in a clear and concise way for the Park.

CE also includes free promotion of the work of First ScotRail, Citylink, Stagecoach, Sustrans, SNH, Hitrans, nestrans, five walking festivals, ACDMO (and next year Deeside DMO), Cairngorms Hostels, local taxi firms, airlines, the Access Code, Inverness Cycle bus, airport bus links, Strathspey Steam Railway, post-buses, the three ski areas, the Wildcat Centre, local communities, Frank Bruce Sculpture Trail, disability walking groups, JMA, SYHA, Cairngorms Farmers Market, visitcairngorms.com and Traveline Scotland: all with links to public transport. This work helps

support partnership working in the Park, and builds positive partner relationships.

In 2008/9 CE included "Cairngorms on a Shoestring" for the first time, highlighting cheap things to see and do by public transport. This important social inclusion project helps the NPP's target groups – the young, disabled people and people of low incomes – as well as elderly people, to access the enjoy the Park.

The two Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs), HITRANS and nestrans, who funded previous year's publications have lost their funding and are unable to contribute. CNPA have investigated other sources of funding, for example the Enterprise Network, with no response. This year SNH are a partner in providing information on National Nature Reserves (NNRs). They have been approached for a financial contribution, but are unable to contribute.

4. Rationale and Strategic Fit

A key aim of the Cairngorms National Park Plan is to:

"promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities."

Good transport provision promotes economic growth and social cohesion. To help achieve this, it is vital that transport is well integrated, available, affordable and accessible to both Park residents and visitors. The CE aids integration and highlights accessibility, whilst marketing affordable transport.

The National Park Plan includes a strategic objective to:

"Encourage and support improvements to public transport quality and accessibility to better meet demand and increase use:

Use of public transport is currently limited by route provision, frequency and a lack of connectivity in places. Services should be targeted to meet the needs of residents and visitors, with a particular focus on integration between transport types and ticketing. Better timetable

information for residents and visitors will increase ease of access and use."

The CE meets the priority in the NPP under "Providing High Quality Opportunities for Outdoor Access" 3c to:

"Specifically market the outdoor access opportunities that have good links to public transport."

It helps to identify & highlight gaps in service provision (4a), as well as highlighting available services (4c). This also meets the same targets in the Outdoor Access Strategy.

The Project also helps raise awareness and understanding of the Park's special qualities, in conjunction with Shoestring, and has links to social inclusion bringing affordable transport information to our target groups of people who are the young, disabled and those on low incomes.

The CE meets several key actions in the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan. It helps highlight gaps in public transport service provision in the Park (8c), assisting with transport to work (7f), a more holistic approach to transport linking visitor services to resident service needs (8a) and encourages more visitor use of public transport (8c).

It compliments the Heather Hopper project. It will include elements of the Cairngorms on a Shoestring project, which aims to encourage more people to discover the Park's special qualities at an affordable cost. CE4 will highlight activities and walks within all areas of the Park and provide a substantial hard-copy presence for Cairngorms on a Shoestring at minimal cost.

Support came for the CE (and the Heather Hopper) from Richard Denman of The Tourism Company in the Europarc mid-term review, calling the CE the best brochure of its class in Europe and an excellent example of best practice. He reported:

"A number of excellent initiatives have been taken to promote the use of public transport by visitors, including the Cairngorms Explorer booklet (with its comprehensive timetables and suggestions for linked walks and packages), the dedicated Heather Hopper bus service, the provision

for carrying bikes on buses and the Badenoch and Strathspey electric vehicle project. This programme of activity could serve as an example to other parks. There is a need to ensure strong promotion to enterprises and visitors and monitoring of take up over time."

The CE therefore represents plays an important role in delivering our Europarc accreditation.

5. Option Analysis

Following the successful partnership with Landmark Press over the last three years, it is suggested that a tender brief be submitted to that company only and a single tender, subject to budget constraints, be accepted from them. This has been agreed by the Scottish Government.

In year one a competitive process was undertaken, but Landmark Press were found to be the only company with the necessary local expertise, design, collation and distribution skills and capacity. Of the four other businesses approached to complete the work, all felt unable to undertake the whole project due to the complexity of collation, design, production and storage & distribution; other graphic design/publishing companies in the Park are too small to undertake this scale of project.

The quality of the CE so far has been very high, with easy collation of timetables, good design which fitted the tender brief well, a perfect standard of proof reading, easy storage at Landmark premises of booklets, and responsive distribution upon request to existing & additional locations, eg libraries, post offices and local visitor centres, 350 in all. No problems have been encountered with Landmark Press in any area.

Based on the last three years experience a total of 35,000 copies of CE5 will be produced, full colour, 72 pages. It will be available online through several websites including the CNPA's at www.cairngorms.co.uk/park/visitors/explorer/index.php

Options for partner funding are limited. Councils and operators do not have spare budgets for the CE. RTPs already contribute and advertising has been tried. CNPA are the only funder or potential funder who have a specific interest in promoting transport within the whole Park area.

We will also improve the accuracy of timetables by advance proofing the copy with all partners (some possible train connections were missed off in previous years). SNH are providing walks and cycle rides in connection to their NNRs which are accessible by public transport and this fits well with the social inclusion aspect of CE promoting travel to our target groups of those on low incomes, young people and disabled people under "Cairngorms on a Shoestring". By adding in elements of Cairngorms on a

Shoestring, the CE grows in its usefulness and delivery of NPP objectives.

6. Risk Assessment

Financially, costs have fluctuated acceptably and slightly in line with printing and paper costs.

Operationally, Landmark Press have proven themselves very capable.

Reputationally, the project is a good, high profile one for the Park Authority, fitting across the Park aims, guiding principles, objectives and priorities.

7. Costs and Funding

COSTS

Production of Booklet & PDF £10,810

Printing of 35k copies 72pp £12,337

Distribution £2,070

Bulk Mail (3,000) £748

Research into effectiveness £1,000

Total Cost to CNPA £26,965

CNPA payments due:

January 09 upon signing £10,000

March 09 upon design completion £10,000

May 09 upon start of distribution £5,965

Historical costs

2005/6 £28,070 (50,000 copies, 64pp)

2006/7 £27,589 (50,000 copies, 64pp)

2007/8 £25,366 (40,000 copies, 64pp)

2008/9 £30,806 (40,000 copies, 72pp including Shoestring)

2009/10 £26,965 (35,000 copies, 72pp including Shoestring)

Design costs have come down over the 5 years as Landmark get used to designing CE. Production costs fluctuate according to paper costs and numbers of pages. Distribution is higher these last 2 years as we include £750 to bulk mail out the CE. We feel Landmark remain competitive and give us a

good deal.

8. Funding conditions

“Work should be carried out in accordance with the Authority’s Commissioning Brief, your tender submission and discussions to be held at the upcoming inception meeting.”

9. Deliverables/ Impact Assessment

CE5 will be published at the beginning of May, with a life of May 2009-April 2010. Success will be measured in the uptake of the brochure. Last year around 35,000 copies were uplifted by the public, so we have gone for this figure in 2009/10. Landmark are identifying new racking opportunities and this should ensure full uptake next year.

The Review of Visitor (printed) information in the Park carried out in 2007 showed the CE had the highest satisfaction rating from visitors and information providers of any Park publication at 83%. 18% of visitors and 77% of information providers were aware of it. This review will be repeated in future years to monitor progress.

We will undertake independent research to assess the CE, and have budgeted for this.

A submission has been made to the Visitor Survey project to include questions on the CE to further monitor impact.

10. Value for Money

Having proven the use of the CE, CE5 builds on this success. The project is considered value for money as it provides an important and unique resource for public transport users in the Park, linking to other projects such as Shoestring and sustainable modes of active transport.

Partnership funding from Hitrans and Nestrans has been lost, this is regrettable, but due to major funding changing in Scotland.

11. Exit or Continuation Arrangements (where applicable)

It is planned to continue the CE and review it year on year to assess its deliverables. CE may well develop and change as passenger travel and information patterns change; merge with other publications; or become electronic only.

12. Additionality

The various operators and councils provide timetables, but not of the quality or area-coverage of the CE. Highland Council provide a complete B&S service timetable, but this does not include any of the added benefits CE includes. CE cannot substitute for this timetable as Highland Council's timetable is part of a branded suite across the Highlands and is reprinted across the year.

CE provides linkages to affordable and accessible walking, cycling and activities which no other local publication does. CE would not be published without the support of the CNPA, so is fully additional.

13. Stakeholder Support

HITRANS and Nestrans are supportive although they cannot continue funding. Public reaction, research, feedback from businesses and voluntary/community groups has been overwhelmingly supportive.

14. Recommendation

It is recommended that the project is approved for spend:

2008/9	£20,000
2009/10	£ 6,965

Name: John Thorne

Signature:

Date:

15. Decision to Approve or Reject

Programme Manager

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Head of Group

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Chief Executive

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Management Team

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Finance Committee

Name:

Signature:

Date: