

**CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
FINANCE COMMITTEE**

FOR DECISION

Title: Heather Hopper 501 Bus

Prepared by: John Thorne, Economic Development Officer

Purpose

To seek the Committee's approval to jointly contribute to the Heather Hopper 501 bus service in 2009 and 2010.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- a) Agree that CNPA should, in conjunction with Highland and Aberdeenshire Councils, co-fund the Heather Hopper 501 bus for the years 2009.

Executive Summary

1. CNPA have co-funded the 501 Heather Hopper bus service since 2006. This request for funding covers 2009.
2. The National Park Plan identified gaps in public transport provision as a major environmental, economic and social issue, forcing visitors and residents to use cars, and meaning some have no adequate access to transport and all the economic and social benefits that brings. Popular recreational sites need to be linked to public transport, and the Heather Hopper helps too to fulfil this Priority for Action. In approving funding for this service to run in 2008, Finance Committee were clear that they wished to see an improvement in uptake. However, it should be noted that numbers have reduced during 2008 from 136 per week to 91 per week.
3. The recommendation to approve funding for a further year is made in recognition of the on-going targeting of the social benefits set out in the National Park Plan. Further effort to target marketing and improve uptake is a priority for this service.

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