

**DRAFT MINUTES of MEETING of the  
FINANCE COMMITTEE of**

**THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY  
held at Talla nan Ros, Kingussie  
on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2009**

**Present:**

Eleanor Mackintosh (Chair)  
David Green

Mary McCafferty  
David Fallows

**In Attendance:**

Stuart Black, Board Member  
Jane Hope, Chief Executive  
Heather Trench, Sustainable Tourism Officer  
Pete Crane, Senior Visitor Services Officer  
Fiona Chalmers, Integrated Land Management Officer  
John Thorne, Economic Development

**Welcome and Apologies**

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that the Committee was currently short of one Member following the Departure of Bruce Luffman. A replacement Member would be found in due course. It was also noted that the current meeting would need to be very crisp and focused in view of the early start to the Planning Committee immediately following the Finance Committee. Any items which were not time critical could be deferred to the next meeting of the Finance Committee which would, in view of the time pressure that day, be rolled over to a meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> March.

**Project Expenditure Proposal: Visitor Survey 2009/10 (Paper 1)**

2. Heather Trench introduced the paper. She noted that this work had been planned for some considerable time in liaison with Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park as a repeat of the joint survey conducted in 2003/04. It was particularly disappointing therefore that Loch Lomond and the Trossachs had withdrawn their support at short notice; it was also disappointing that Visitscotland as Scotland's

principal tourism agency also declining to support this work. The local Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) were very keen to go ahead with the work. The paper therefore proposed that the CNPA should continue with the Survey as sole funder.

3. In discussion Members expressed disappointment that Partners were failing to fund this important work. Longer term, it would be important to look at the viability of these types of projects, and the recently proposed Collaborative Business Model (Cairngorms Business Partnership) provided the opportunity to engage the private sector in taking this work forward in the future. The role of the CNPA was to help build the capacity of the business sector to deliver this type of product. The suggestion was made that the offer should be made even now to the business community to be engaged in the running of this project – but recognising that they may not at this stage have the capacity to do so.
4. **Members approved the funding of up to £48,000 towards the delivery of the 2009/10 Visitor Survey and asked officers to discuss with the business sector their role in taking this work forward.**

#### **The Sale of Panoramic Posters (Paper 2)**

5. Pete Crane introduced the paper which sought the Committee's approval to the CNPA printing and selling posters of the panoramic paintings for a time-limited trial period, prior to developing a future licensing agreement with a suitable partner. It was emphasised that the ultimate objective was that the private sector should be selling these posters but without further work no one was well placed to judge the value of the product. It was also noted that the proposed boundary change at the southern end of the Park would mean the drawings would need to be modified anyway. The objective was to ensure that any retailer would be able to sell the posters once available. It was noted that careful thought would be required in this pilot work given that with a small-scale trial the cost per unit would inevitably be considerably higher than would be the case with large-scale commercial conditions.
6. The paper was seeking an in-principle decision from the Committee; subsequent to that Pete Crane would come back to the Committee with more detail for final approval. This proposal was about the CNPA taking on some of the risk before the commercial opportunities were passed over to the private sector.
7. **The Committee approved the paper subject to two minor amendments:**
  - a. **Paragraph B of the recommendation should read "agree that this trial should last until October 31<sup>st</sup> 2010 at the latest".**

- b. Additional sub paragraph (d) to be added to the recommendations on the paper to the effect that: "recognise that the public sector does not intend to compete with the private sector nor to use public money to subsidise commercial activity in the sale of these posters".**

#### **Cairngorms Explorer (Paper 4)**

8. John Thorne introduced the paper which sought the Committee's approval for funding of the Cairngorms Explorer for 2008/09 and 2009/10. It was noted that previous partner funders Hightrans and Nestrans had lost their funding and were unable to contribute. Other sources of funding had been explored, notably the Enterprise Networks and SNH but with no success.
9. In discussion it was noted that this was a popular publication and the general feeling was that it should continue in some form. However, with the falling away of partner funding the CNPA needed to look at the scope of this publication in the future. Possibly it should become part of Parki and there might be scope for it being more Web-based. The Committee was concerned about the absence of partner funding and agreed to the funding proposals in the paper, but on the condition that staff started considering with the private sector what future options might be. It was also noted that if this project were to continue in future years a new tender would be required. As a general point the Committee noted that they would want to see proposals for how this project could be taken forward in the future coming back to the Finance Committee later that year rather than towards the end of the financial year when there was little scope or time for other options to be pursued.
10. **The Committee approved the expenditure for 2008/09 and 2009/10 as set out in the paper.**

#### **Heather Hopper 501 Bus (Paper 5)**

11. John Thorne introduced the paper which sought the Committee's approval to jointly contribute to the Heather Hopper 501 Bus Service in 2009 and 2010. It was noted that Highland and Aberdeenshire Councils were continuing to co-fund this project. In discussion it was noted that in approving the previous year's funding to this project, the Committee had urged earlier advertising in an attempt to get usage of the service increasing. Although there had been considerably more marketing in the previous year it was noted that the numbers using the service had nevertheless gone down. The Committee felt that there was little choice but to continue with this service for the moment and noted that partners had also continued to fund this project. Councils were committed for two more years. The CNPA should consider a full

review of this service along with its partners well in advance of a decision on funding beyond 2009 and 2010.

12. **The Committee approved the expenditure as proposed for 2009 and 2010.**

#### **Project Expenditure Proposal: Clim-ATIC Project (Paper 6)**

13. This paper to come back to the Finance Committee on the 20<sup>th</sup> March given that the scale of the expenditure required full Board approval.

#### **Finance Review – Ten Months to 31/01/2009**

14. This information paper to come back to the Finance Committee on the 20<sup>th</sup> March.

#### **Point of Entry Marker Project (Paper 7)**

15. This information paper to come back to the Finance Committee on the 20<sup>th</sup> March.

#### **Date of Next Meeting**

16. 20<sup>th</sup> March, Richmond Memorial Hall, Tomintoul.