

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

**THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
held at Gordon Hotel, Tomintoul
on 20 March 2008, 9:00 a.m.**

Present:

Eleanor Mackintosh
David Green
Bruce Luffman

Mary McCafferty
David Fallows

In Attendance:

Jane Hope, Chief Executive
David Cameron, Head of Corporate Services

Apologies:

None

Welcome

1. The Chairperson welcomed all present to the meeting. There were no apologies.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

2. No minutes considered at this meeting.

Draft Corporate and Operational Plans

3. David Cameron explained that the meeting had been called to allow the members of the Finance Committee to raise any detailed questions on finances or budget proposals associated with the Corporate and Operational Plans to be considered later that day by the Board.
4. In discussion, members highlighted the following points:
 - a) In light of the forthcoming strategic review of National Parks, there may be a need to bring forward the visitor survey into 2008/09 and therefore make additional budget provision in 2008/09 for that activity.

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- b) Members had concerns that the amounts of funds invested in access infrastructure could make considerable in-roads into the Authority's available resources. Officers highlighted that work in developing an Access Trust was designed to ensure that any funding the Authority invested in this area would lever in additional funding from elsewhere. There was considerable debate around this point, with some members expressing a view that National Park status brought with it high expectations in terms of access infrastructure and facilities. Other members remained concerned over the expense of the activity, and the potential to divert resources from other priorities.
 - c) Promoting affordable housing was a priority.
 - d) Planning enforcement activities were increasingly a priority given the scale of planning applications, and the number of conditions being made as part of the determination process.
 - e) More emphasis was required on business, and the role of business in delivering the Park Plan.
 - f) It was important to begin to achieve quick, highly visible wins to reinforce the work of the Park Authority and the impact of the Park and Park Plan. Among those potential "wins" highlighted were the Speyside Way, Forest Crofts, and the single service point collaboration with The Highland Council.
5. David Cameron explained that, for presentational purposes, the budget figures in the Corporate Plan had been developed in a different way from those in the operational plan. The Operational Plan figures focused solely on planned cash expenditure in delivering operational plan activities. In order to give a better sense of the overall level of investment in each of the Corporate Plan strands, the figures in the Corporate Plan absorbed all staff and other support costs, such as accommodation and training costs, to provide a total cost estimate.
6. David Cameron agreed to provide a consolidated budget paper to the next Committee meeting, in which the cash expenditure proposals set out in the Operational Plan would be shown with Core budgets.
7. **Members approved the paper as a formal note of decisions taken.**

Date of Next Meeting

8. The next meeting of the Finance Committee was scheduled to take place at 9am on 16 May 2008, Clova Hall, Glen Clova.