
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: OVERSIGHT OF CNPA WORK ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Prepared by: DAVID CAMERON, HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES

Purpose

To determine the manner in which the Audit Committee should discharge the responsibilities for overseeing the Authority's work on climate change referred to it by the Board.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- a) **confirm their preference to have separate meetings to deal with climate change issues, on separate days from scheduled Board or Planning Committee meetings.**
- b) **agree the proposed addition to the Committee's Terms of Reference set out in point 8.**

Executive Summary

The Audit Committee took on responsibility for overseeing delivery of the Authority's Organisational Greening Action Plan, following the Board meeting in March 2006. Board meetings in February and April 2007 have also delegated responsibility for oversight of the Authority's wider work on climate change to the Committee.

This paper seeks confirmation from members on the means of discharging these additional responsibilities.

The paper also seeks approval to a proposed addition to the Committee's terms of reference to cover these areas of activity, for subsequent ratification by the Board in October.

OVERSIGHT OF CNPA WORK ON CLIMATE CHANGE FOR DECISION

Background

1. The Audit Committee took on responsibility for overseeing delivery of the Authority's Organisational Greening Action Plan, following the Board meeting in March 2006.
2. The Board considered the Authority's 2007/08 Operational Plan at its meeting on 23 February. As part of the Operational Plan discussion, members agreed the importance of climate change issues and proposed that a Board sub-group might be set up, to work alongside staff, in order to give weight and importance to the subject. The Board noted at this meeting that this joint staff / Board member sub-group may be most conveniently done through the Audit Committee, which already includes oversight of greening issues within its remit.
3. The Board meeting on 20 April further clarified this discussion, by confirming that it was the intention that work on climate change be achieved through the Audit Committee, but not as part of its existing scheduled meetings, in order that other Board members may attend if they wished.

Consideration of Climate Change Issues

4. Discussions between the Committee Chair, members and the Head of Corporate Services has confirmed that there is no time within the existing three scheduled Audit Committee meetings to deal with additional business. The scale of existing Committee business means that available meeting time is already fully used and it would not be possible to consider climate change issues in any meaningful way.
5. Discussions with Committee members have also suggested that it would be preferable to arrange additional meetings to specifically cover climate change issues on dates which are not already taken up by other Board or Committee meetings. Members do not considered it feasible to seek to hold meetings either immediately before or after Board or Planning Committee meetings if due consideration is to be given to these issues and if the process is to be inclusive, encouraging participation from other Board members and staff. It is also recognised that this will require an additional time commitment to be made by members involved.
6. **Committee members are asked to confirm their preference to have separate meetings to deal with climate change issues, on separate days from scheduled Board or Planning Committee meetings.** Following confirmation of this, I will work with the Management Team to identify a potential schedule of dates and draft schedule of business for consideration. These additional meetings would remain Audit Committee meetings, chaired by the Committee Chair, but would have business focused solely on climate change and organisational greening work.

Audit Committee Terms of Reference

7. The current Audit Committee terms of reference are set out in Annex 1 to this paper. While the Audit Committee already considers the progress of the Authority's own work in delivering its Organisational Greening Plan, this has not yet been reflected in the Committee's terms of reference.
8. It is proposed that the following item is added to the terms of reference: "j) to oversee the CNPA's work on implementing the Authority's Organisational Greening plans and the progress of work addressing climate change issues agreed within the Park Plan".
9. **Committee members are asked to agree the proposed addition to the Committee's Terms of Reference set out in point 8.**

Future Action

10. The Board is due to consider Committee membership at its meeting in October. Subject to members' views on the proposals set out here, a revised Terms of Reference will be presented to the Board at that meeting for formal approval.
11. It is also proposed to present the Committee's plans for its role in overseeing work on climate change to the Board meeting in October. This will ensure all Board members are kept fully informed of meeting plans and support the aim of ensuring this process is as inclusive as possible.

DAVID CAMERON
15 August 2007

davidcameron@cairngorms.co.uk

CNPA AUDIT COMMITTEE

Proposed revision to Terms of Reference (additions in italics)

- Membership:** 5 (quorum 3)
- Members:** Eric Baird
Nonie Coulthard
Sue Walker
Bob Wilson
Duncan Bryden
- Staff in Attendance:** Chief Executive (Accountable Officer) – non voting
Head of Corporate Services - non voting
- External Attendance:** To include external auditor and internal auditor as required. These representatives have the right to free and confidential access to the Chair of the Committee.
- Remit:**
- a) To agree appointment of an internal auditor;
 - b) To oversee and monitor the development of the CNPA's internal audit plan (in accordance with the Scottish Public Finance Manual);
 - c) To receive and consider reports by the internal auditor; review the adequacy of management responses to issues identified by audit activity, and to review arrangements for monitoring implementation of agreed recommendations
 - d) To monitor the adequacy of the CNPA's internal control systems;
 - e) To review the planned activity of the Authority's external auditors and to consider reports by the external auditor on the CNPA's annual accounts and other matters;
 - f) To oversee the CNPA's arrangements for ensuring use of resources economically, efficiently and effectively (as required by s.19 of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000).
 - g) To oversee the CNPA's risk management and corporate governance arrangements.
 - h) To provide advice to the Accountable Officer on completion of the Statement of Internal Control.
 - i) To review major findings of other relevant audit reports or Parliamentary Committee findings, insofar as they affect the overall performance of the Authority
- Committee Life:** Permanent, but with a review of membership, chairmanship and remit each year (in September).