

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND DELIVERY COMMITTEE MEETING of

THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

**held at the Pagoda, Grantown-on-Spey
on 26th January 2018 at 9.00am**

PRESENT

Peter Argyle
Becky Badger

Angela Douglas
Eleanor Mackintosh

In Attendance:

Grant Moir, CEO
David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services
Danie Ralph, Finance Manager
Francoise van Buuren, Head of Communications & Engagement
Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board

Apologies: Xander McDade

Election of Committee Convener

1. David Cameron highlighted that as a result of Kate Howie's departure from the Cairngorms National Park Authority Board and according to Standing Orders following the revision of Board membership on Committees and Groups at the October 2017 Board meeting, the Election of Committee Convener was due to take place. He therefore asked for nominations for the Convener of the Committee.
2. As there were no nominations, volunteers were asked to come forward. Angela Douglas volunteered. Members present confirmed that Angela take on the role of Committee Convener. There being only one volunteer, David Cameron declared Angela Douglas as appointed Convener.
3. **Action:**
 - i. **Angela Douglas to take the position of Convener of the Finance & Delivery Committee to last until 30th September 2018.**

Welcome and Introduction

4. The Convener welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted.

Minutes of Last Meeting – Approval

5. The Minutes of the last meeting on 30th June 2017 were approved with the following amendments:
 - At Para 16b: the addition of ‘..with members noting that Highland Council in common with many local authorities were examining their ability to continue to provide support to third sector organisations in the face of wider pressures on funding. Such organisations therefore potentially face a significant squeeze on their income and financial viability.

Matters Arising

6. There were no matters arising.
7. The Convener requested an update on the Action Point from the previous meeting:
 - Action Point at Para. 18i) – **Ongoing/ Closed** – Board Business session to discuss the implications of potential new bill associated with local government and community empowerment to be organised from winter 2017/18. Grant Moir reported that it was a bit slower than anticipated and was ongoing but would come back in due course. David Cameron advised that it was on Management Team’s list of discussion sessions to be scheduled with the Board and therefore it was agreed to be closed as an action for this Committee.

Declaration of Interests

8. There were no interests declared.

Finance Monitoring: 9 Months to 31 December 2017 (Paper 1)

9. Danie Ralph introduced this Paper which presents a summary review of income and expenditure for the 9 months to 31 December 2017. He highlighted:
 - a) The Heritage Lottery Funding bid for the Capercaillie bid was expected at the end of March 2018
 - b) Planning fees from Local Authorities were expected mid-February 2018

- c) The final payment to Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland (OATS) for 2017/18 project delivery had been made this week.
- d) Yesterday, a note had been received from Scottish Government confirming that the non-cash budget for next year would be £118,000 and Grant and Aid was being drawn down on schedule.
- e) On the LEADER front up to 23rd January 2018 £525,000 had been paid out in grant to approved projects, £31,000 had still to be claimed which consisted of three project claims with the difference being around £500 with only a 5pence difference in LARCs as a result of rounding. David Cameron explained that the £500 difference arose from the Cairngorms LEADER staff helping the applicant by only claiming for eligible costs to avoid the applicant receiving penalties.
- f) Heritage Lottery Fund payments for Tomintoul & Glenlivet Partnership for the quarter ending 30th September 2017 had been received on Monday 22nd January 2018 and the payment for quarter ending 31 December 2017 was still awaited.
- g) HIE funding to the Tomintoul & Glenlivet Partnership had been paid into the Authority's bank account this morning.

10. In discussion the Finance & Delivery Committee made the following comments and observations:

- a) With reference to paragraph 19, was internet bandwidth capacity currently limited? David Cameron reported the bandwidth had increased 10 fold from 10 months ago, helping to accommodate staff with virtual machines working elsewhere and potentially supporting moving towards a cloud data domain and implementation of other technology advances for staff. He added that management would be looking at the cost benefit, efficiencies and also wider job satisfaction of staff.
- b) With reference to table 1 at paragraph 30 which part of the outgoings were attributable to costs? It was explained that each of the headings were stages in the system and that there would be administration and associated costs at each stage in the process.
- c) With reference to table 1 at paragraph 30 the meaning of 'Project grants advanced' was queried. David Cameron advised when the LAG decide to approve a project, the National Park Authority, as accountable body for LEADER on behalf of the LAG, issue an award letter. In order for communities not to be disadvantaged by cash flow pressures, communities submit their grant claim to the Authority, we pay them and then we submit our LEADER claim to Scottish Government to get the money back. Cash flow issues therefore sit with the Authority rather than with the community groups delivering the projects.
- d) Had a reason been given for the claim that had been rejected? David Cameron advised that this was as a result of Scottish Government processing in

Edinburgh, where they had clicked the button to reject it by accident but had then reinstated the same claim with a different claim number.

- e) With reference to Annex I Danie agreed to add the rag system to the table for the next meeting.

11. The Finance and Delivery Committee noted:

- a) **the results of the 9 months to 31 December 2017;**
- b) **the position on projects in the same period.**

12. Action:

- i. **Rag system to be added to Annex I Actual Outturn paper for the next and future meetings.**

Supporting LEADER Programme Delivery (Paper 2)

13. David Cameron introduced the Paper which seeks the Committee's approval to extend the timetable over which the Authority will support LEADER project approvals and grant claims as the Accountable Body for the Cairngorms LEADER Programme. Timetables for support were set out in paragraph 5 of the paper and dates included in that paragraph. He added that 10% of total LEADER allocation had been ring fenced for cooperation projects and the proposed extended period of support will allow those projects to develop fully.

14. In discussion the Finance & Delivery Committee made the following comment:

- a) Were there any cooperation projects currently being worked up? David Cameron confirmed that there were currently three in the pipeline, one with the South Aberdeenshire LAG concerning a mountain bike trail and two other transnational projects centring on youth engagement in community development and rural transport.

15. The Finance & Delivery Committee :

- a) **Considered the updates on the Authority's position as Accountable Body in support of the Cairngorms LEADER Programme; and**
- b) **Agreed the proposed approach as Accountable Body from 23 November until further notice, as set out in paragraphs 5 to 9 of the paper.**

- 16. Actions: None.**

Draft Budget 2018/19 (Paper 3)

17. David Cameron introduced the Paper which set out the current budget estimates for 2018/19 financial year for consideration by the Committee as part of the overall budget development process and prior to presentation of final budget estimates to the full Board at its meeting in March 2018. He highlighted the following points:
 - a) Would have liked to have given more detail on some aspects of budget proposals, which would be more in keeping with previous years, however the timing of the meeting some weeks earlier in the process meant that it was not possible.
 - b) It was estimated that the office extension would be complete by end July 2018.
 - c) With reference to pages 2-3 in Annex 1, the red line means redundant budget codes that would be removed for next year, and 'BA' means Ballater, whereby separate budgets and costs are in development for the Ballater office to allow more detailed monitoring of the total cost of that office provision.
18. Grant Moir advised that the draft Corporate Plan 2018-2022 would be circulated electronically to the Board by the end of the day to support the discussions next Friday.
19. The Finance & Delivery Committee made the following comments and observations:
 - a) Praise for the excellent outturn leading to good results.
 - b) With reference to paragraph 11, when would the payment of Board fees approach be reviewed? David Cameron advised that it had been discussed twice at Staffing and Recruitment Committee and would feature as part of the discussions at the March 2018 Formal Board meeting as part of the Draft budget paper.
 - c) Had the payment of Board fees policy impacted financially? David Cameron advised that there had been £4,500-£5,000 less board fee payments thus far as a result of the policy. He added that the levels of deductions made in the first quarter were of a higher level than those made in quarters two and three.
 - d) With reference to Annex 1 was the level of spend set out in the Operational Plan provisions proportionate for the work to be done? Grant Moir explained that Visitor Experience included ranger grants, Mountains and the People project and the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland (OATS) commitments. which by their nature tended to be higher value financial investments. Conservation and Land Management included Cairngorms Nature and land management commitments and Rural Development included Planning and e-planning. He added that the proportions were being double checked currently

and more information on what each heading encompassed would be forthcoming in due course.

- e) Agreement that it would be useful to have a summary of the current commitments against the flexible elements. Agreed for this to be brought to the next Committee meeting. Action.
- f) Can leverage be estimated? Grant confirmed that it could.
- g) Could it be explained why the Subs to Organisations on the last page of the Annex was so high? Danie Ralph confirmed that this goes to UK National Parks as our contribution to their collective activities.

20. Françoise van Buuren joined the meeting.

21. The Finance & Delivery Committee considered the current position on budget development as per the recommendations detailed in the report.

22. Action:

- i. **Summary of the current commitments against the flexible elements to be brought to the next meeting.**

CNPA Gaelic Language Plan 2018-22 Consultation Report (Paper 4)

23. Françoise van Buuren introduced the Paper which presents the results of the CNPA's Gaelic Language Plan 2018-22 consultation and seeks the Committee's agreement to the proposed amendments to the draft plan, and approval for the revised version to be submitted to Bòrd na Gàidhlig in March 2018.

24. The Finance & Delivery Committee made the following comments and observations:

- a) Why did it seem that the paper had bypassed the Board and why had the Convener and Deputy Convener agreed the consultation yet the Finance & Delivery Committee were being asked to agree the amendments? David Cameron advised that it fitted in with the Finance & Delivery Committee's remit with the emphasis on the 'delivery' part of the Committee's remit. The Board Convener advised that some things are delegated to Committees of the Board and that this piece of work was one of them. Grant added that at this stage there was not a particular sense of strategic risk around this consultation in comparison to other consultations that are handled by the full Board and felt this had been tackled in the best way possible to meet Bòrd na Gàidhlig's requirements and also expedite our own processes as efficiently as possible. David and Peter added that should Bòrd na Gàidhlig respond with any significant amendments to the proposals then it would be escalated to the full Board.

- b) Had there been a demand of Gaelic speaking people arriving at the office?
Francoise confirmed that in the past five years there had been three emails in Gaelic.
- c) Suggestion made that when it comes to replacing the current Columbia wear to consider placing the Gaelic branding on the clothing alongside the other branding.
- d) Suggestion made to keep a note of the comments made in the consultation not in the plan itself but in the actions as some good ideas had been brought up.
- e) David Cameron advised that staff are supported by way of the Authority covering transport costs if they wish to attend Gaelic language classes in their own time.
- f) Francoise added that there was enthusiasm with this work within the Communications team.

25. The Finance & Delivery Committee:

- a) **Noted the consultation results and approved the suggested amendments as set out in the paper to the Gaelic Language Plan 2018-22 for submission to Bòrd na Gàidhlig in March 2018;**
- b) **Agreed that no further additions need to be made to the Gaelic Language Plan core commitments.**

26. Actions:

- i. **Gaelic Language Plan to be signed off by Board Convener and Board Deputy-Convener prior to submission.**
- ii. **Should Bòrd na Gàidhlig have any issues with the Gaelic Language Plan, a paper will go to the full Board who will then be asked to make and agree the amendments to the plan before resubmission to Bòrd na Gàidhlig.**

Delivering Financial Efficiencies (Paper 5)

- 27. David Cameron introduced the Paper which sets out the Authority's delivery against financial efficiency targets set by Scottish Government as a part of the Government's annual budget processes.
- 28. The Finance & Delivery Committee made the following comments and observations:
 - a) Comment made that it seemed opportunist rather than targeted? David Cameron advised that when cuts are continually made the flexibility goes to a great extent in terms of capacity to strategically plan from efficiency savings: for

example, in context of the no compulsory redundancies policy, efficiencies in staffing and payroll can only be opportunistic as staff turnover arises. An element of efficiency savings continues to come through forward planning. Grant reminded the Committee that a lot of work was done in the 2 years prior to 2016 when the Management Team was reduced by 50%. He advised that the new policy on offering staff to buy an additional week of annual leave proved popular with lots of applications, with savings of around £10,000 established through that.

- b) Agreement that it was encouraging to hear in the current circumstances.

29. The Finance & Delivery Committee:

- a) **Noted the position on the Authority's delivery of efficiency savings in line with Scottish Government targets in 2016/17 and 2017/18;**
- b) **Noted that some efficiency savings have been identified toward the 2018/19 target and that work will continue to secure the additional efficiencies required to realise the target.**

30. Actions: None.

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31. Grant Moir provided an update on National Parks Partnership and upcoming projects.

32. Suggestion was made to recirculate the Committee's terms of reference. This was agreed.

33. Suggestion made to organise a short induction session before the next meeting for the benefit of new Members on the Committee. David Cameron agreed to work with Alix to find a suitable date after the financial year end.

34. Actions:

- i. **Finance & Delivery Committee's Terms of Reference to be circulated to the Committee.**
- ii. **Short Induction session following the financial year end and before the next Finance & Delivery Committee meeting to be organised.**

Date of Next Meeting

35. The next Finance and Delivery Committee meeting will take place on Friday 29th June 2018 in the Community Hall, Nethy Bridge.
36. The public part of this meeting finished at 10.30hours.