

**MINUTES of MEETING of the  
FINANCE COMMITTEE of  
THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY  
held at Nethybridge  
on 27 August 2004**

**Present:**

Eleanor Mackintosh  
Andrew Thin  
Gregor Rimell  
David Selfridge  
Joyce Simpson

**In Attendance:**

Andy Rinning, Interim Head of Corporate Services  
Denby Pettitt, Finance Manager  
Nick Halfhide, Head of Strategic Policy

**Apologies:**

None

The Chairperson welcomed the Finance Manager to his first Finance Committee meeting.

**Minutes of Meeting of 21 May 2004**

1. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved without amendment.

**Matters Arising**

2. In response to the action points at item 7, the Head of Corporate Services advised that details of the budget allocation to projects were set out in Annex 2 of Paper 1. In relation to training, it was explained that this was an operational matter. The new Human Resources Manager will be responsible for developing personal training and development plans for all staff. Budget allocations had already been made within core operating costs to cover personal, group and corporate training.

### **Communities Living and Working in the Park (Paper 3)**

3. The Committee agreed to a change in the Agenda to take this paper first.

The Head of Strategic Policy explained that the proposal related to the preparation of the Park Plan and had been covered in the paper approved by the Board on 2 July 2004. This was one of the key strategic areas and it was important to have this work completed by April 2005. The proposal is to appoint an external consultant to carry out the work.

- a) In response to a question about the value of the contract, it was explained that a considerable amount of work would be involved with external stakeholders gathering material, which would be time consuming. Other work would include desk-top investigation, analysis of material, workshops with stakeholders and preparation of material and reports.
- b) In response to a point raised about the involvement of communities in the Angus Glens that were resident outside the Park boundary, it was acknowledged that there would be instances of this in other areas around the Park and a flexible approach would be adopted to take such activities into account.
- c) In response to a question on internal staff and budget, it was explained that the new Economic Development Officer was not yet in place but would be involved in this project when taking up post. Provision had been made for the cost of the project within programme expenditure.
- d) The Convenor expressed his support for this project and was keen for the work to proceed in order not to hold up the preparation of the Park Plan. It would be excellent value for money provided a good written brief is prepared.

4. The Committee approved the proposal.

### **Outturn 4 months (April to July 2004) (Paper 1)**

5. The Finance Manager introduced this paper and explained that outturn was being compared to the original budget prepared at the beginning of the financial year. Whilst the figures showed a deficit, this represented the difference between actual expenditure and the original projected spend over the four months period. The main reasons for the difference in figures was due to greater spend on: other staff costs, office costs, project contributions and capital expenditure, than had been programmed during the first 4 months period. For purposes of internal monitoring and financial information, monthly reports will be submitted to the Senior Management Team. A paper showing the quarterly outturns and projected final outturn for the year will be prepared for the next Finance Committee meeting in November.

- a) In response to a question on the costs of recruitment and papers used for advertising, it was explained that the high cost was due to timing and most of the recruitment is a one-off exercise and front loaded. On newspapers, the Staffing and Recruitment Committee had agreed that everything should be accessible to local papers in addition to Scottish nationals – the Park is a National Park and in order to recruit the best qualified staff it must be able to use the national press for that purpose.
- b) On a question about projects and programme spend, it was explained that projects were managed by CNPA and funded by contributions from partners,

including CNPA. Programme spend covered expenditure allocated to the six main themes set out in the corporate plan.

- c) On a question about the format of the financial information provided to the Committee, it was agreed that the current format provided a clear insight to the CNPA financial position and should continue to be presented in that format.
- d) The Convenor noted that the first quarter spend was less than forecast and that careful planning would be needed to maintain the forecast spend for the remainder of the year.

- 6. The Committee noted the outturn for the 4 months to end July 2004 and agreed to continue to receive financial information in its current format.

### **Ratification of Expenditure Justifications Previously Circulated and Approved in Principle by Correspondence (Paper 2)**

- 7. The Interim Head of Corporate Services drew members attention to the four items set out in the paper, previously circulated by correspondence. Members had already approved the proposals in principle and formal ratification was now being sought. The Convenor proposed that all four proposals be formally ratified. He stated that it was important to retain a process whereby staff are able to submit proposals to committee members by correspondence in order not to hold up the business of the organisation. To hold proposals back until the next available committee would not be in the authority's best interest. Approvals in principle would continue to be ratified at the next available committee.
- 8. The Committee approved the expenditure justifications and agreed to consider future proposals by correspondence where the need arose.

### **CNP Entry Point Development (Paper 4)**

- 9. The Interim Head of Corporate Services informed members that the original proposals for entry point signage had been considered by the Board on 2 July 2004, subject to further work being carried out. The details of this further work will be brought to the Board meeting in September for consideration. This paper was tabled to keep the Finance Committee aware of progress and to note the cost of the extension to the contract.
- 10. The Committee noted the extension to the contract.

### **Financial Framework Governing the National Park (Paper 5)**

- 11. The Interim Head of Corporate Services introduced the paper which sets out the formal arrangements required between the National Park Authority and the Scottish Executive in relation to financial operations. As an Executive NDPB the financial arrangements of the Park Authority are governed by the provisions contained in a management statement and Financial memorandum to be agreed between the Park Authority and the Scottish Executive. Members were informed that the Committee had seen an earlier draft of the document at its meeting on 7 November 2003. The current document is the final draft which is required to be adopted by the Committee prior to submission to the Scottish Executive, for Ministerial approval.

12.The Committee agreed to adopt the document and approved its submission to the Scottish Executive for Ministerial approval.

## **AOCB**

13.No other competent business was raised..

## **Date of Next Meeting**

14.The next meeting of the Finance Committee will be held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2004 at 9.30am at Glenlivet.