

**MINUTES of MEETING of the
FINANCE COMMITTEE of
THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
held at Community Hall, Kincaig
on 27 September 2013**

Present:

Eleanor Mackintosh (Chair)
Gregor Rimell

Duncan Bryden
John Latham (from start of item 6, paper 2)

In Attendance:

Grant Moir, Chief Executive
David Cameron, Corporate Services Director
Daniel Ralph, Finance Manager
Pete Crane, Head of Visitor Services
Sandra Middleton, Head of Rural Development

Apologies:

None

Welcome and Apologies

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Bill Lobban and Willie McKenna who were attending. There were no apologies received.

Minutes of Previous Meetings

1. Minutes of the meeting of 16 August 2013 were approved with no amendments.

Matters Arising

2. David Cameron reported that final accounts for 2012/13 had been released by the Auditor General and were therefore now able to be laid before Parliament.
3. Amendments had been made to the offer of grant to the Cairngorms Business Partnership in line with the proposals made by the Committee at its last meeting and the grant offer issued.

CNPA Capital Funding: Nethy Bridge Community Centre (Paper 1)

4. Pete Crane introduced this paper, which sought Finance Committee's approval to proposed capital funding for Nethy Bridge Community Centre from 2013/14 shovel

ready capital funding. The proposed funding investment did secure some further leverage with £50,000 to come from within the Community Centre's own resources.

5. In response to points of discussion, Pete confirmed that the financial history of the Nethy Bridge Community Centre (NBCC) and business plans for the project both gave evidence of the ongoing sustainability of the project.
6. In response to a question, Pete stated that he was unsure of the exact nature of the NBCC's ownership or tenure of the property and he would follow up this point of detail.
7. Members discussed the period of condition placed within the grant offer of 10 years of public use following receipt of grant. Pete and David explained that legal advice taken on this and a number of similar projects suggested that a ten year condition was the maximum period that the Authority could expect to have enforced through the courts if need be and therefore there was little point in adding a longer period to grant conditions. David also highlighted that in his experience, a 10 year condition was also the period of tie-in condition used by Europe in any EU supported capital funding.
8. **Members thanked Pete for the paper and supporting comments.**
9. **Members agreed the funding proposal.**
10. John Latham joined the meeting at this point.

CNPA Capital Funding: Gateway Improvements (Paper 2)

11. Pete Crane introduced this paper, which sought the Committee's agreement to the package of Gateway improvements from capital works in 2013/14. The capital contribution proposed by the Authority is £30,000 of a total funding package of £61,000. There are further works of £10,500 for which as yet there is no funding cover, with one aspect of the activity package capable of being postponed should funding not be sourced.
12. Following discussion of the proposals, members agreed that this project was welcomed while the funding shortfall was not seen as a priority for the Authority. Members noted the Crown Estate's current contribution was £6k together with ongoing maintenance and there was an expectation by members that the Estate could make up more of this shortfall position.
13. Members congratulated Pete and other staff for getting the project to this point.
14. **Members agreed the funding proposed of £30,000.**

CNPA Capital Funding: Laggan

15. Pete Crane briefed members on the current situation regarding the potential developments of a Hub supporting the Mountain Bike Trails in Laggan which may be funded by the Authority. Funding of £20k had been made available to the community group to support planning application processes and fees. Overall, the project group had not been progressing matters nearly as quickly as we would have wished, although progress did appear to have been better in the last month or so. The community

group were now planning to use a number of outsourced professional contractors with a variety of skills to progress the project rather than a single project manager.

16. Pete highlighted that the business plan did show the potential for a facility able to cover its costs, including a part-time manager. There has been some support provided by CNPA staff in developing the business plan. The business plan and wider work done in the area recognised the economic importance of investment in facilities for this area.
17. Pete reported that the current timetable was to seek planning permission for the development by the November Planning Committee.
18. Members thanked Pete for his update and recognised the importance of a potential investment such as this for that area. In terms of managing the Authority's capital allocations, members affirmed it was appropriate to retain a potential allocation of funding to this project in the programme. Equally, in terms of financial planning it was important that contingency plans were developed around emergency reallocation of funding should this project not move forward for any reason.
19. Grant Moir and Pete agreed that a timeline would be developed for the project and monthly updates prepared against that timeline.
20. Members agreed that they should continue to receive updates on progress either at Committee meetings or by email circulation as appropriate.

CNPA Capital Funding: Kindrochit Castle (Paper 3)

21. Sandra Middleton introduced this paper, which updated Committee on the position of the agreed package of works to maintain the ruins of Kindrochit Castle in Braemar, Aberdeenshire, and to enhance the site's long-term potential as a visitor attraction. Originally, a £60k CNPA contribution to a works package of £140k had been agreed, with Aberdeenshire and Historic Scotland providing £60k and £20k in funding respectively. In delivering the procurement of the project, total costs had increased to £196k and no funding was received by the project team from Historic Scotland. The Authority had agreed to continue to provide its £60k funding, matched by Aberdeenshire, to deliver a reduced package of maintenance works while the window of opportunity with reasonable weather over the summer was available.
22. In discussion, members noted the value of the project investment to supporting the cultural heritage of the NP and also the potential economic impact for the area of the enhancement of a visitor attraction.
23. **Members agreed that should sufficient capital funding be available within the programme, an additional £38k could be made available by the Authority provided this was matched by Aberdeenshire Council to deliver the full package of works now costed at £196k under the tender process.**

Finance Monitoring: Review of period to 31 August 2013 (Paper 4)

24. Daniel Ralph presented the latest 2013/14 budget monitoring figures to the Committee, which focused on financial activity between end June 2013 and end August 2013, and also on the cumulative position in the year to end August.

25. At £693k, total Operational Plan investment was ahead of the position at this time last year (£641k) giving some suggestion that total Operational Plan expenditure may not be quite so loaded into the final quarter of the year as in recent years. However, the amount of work required to deliver the capital investment strands would potentially result in some delays in Operational Plan activities over the course of the next few months.
26. Daniel highlighted that a detailed review of budgets and the Operational Plan investment proposals was underway and he hoped would be completed by the early October.
27. Overall, at this point in the year core expenditure on salaries and running costs was slightly ahead of budget in most areas and this would also be reviewed to ensure the planned outturn position could be achieved.
28. **Members thanked Daniel for producing the report.**
29. **Members noted the report.**

Any Other Competent Business

30. There were no other items of business considered.

Date of Next Meeting

31. Committee meeting 8 November 2013, Beaton Craigie Room, Albert Halls, Ballater.