

FOR PUBLICATION

MT 06/07

HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS ENTERPRISE

MINUTE OF THE MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT TEAM (SUB GROUP) HELD ON THURSDAY, 8 MARCH 2007

PRESENT: Sandy Cumming (Chief Executive)
Sandy Brady (Director – Strategy)
Forbes Duthie (Director – Corporate Services)
John Watt (Director – Strengthening Communities)
Anne Muirden (Executive Office)

1 GAELIC LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT 2007-08 (22030) (HIE 2007/00370)

This paper sought approval of £400,000 to finance a programme of Gaelic development by Comunn na Gaidhlig (CnaG), Cli Gaidhlig and Tosg on behalf of HIE during the financial year 2007–08. The proposed funding represented HIE's component of a funding partnership between HIE and Bord na Gaidhlig (BnaG) and represented the means through which HIE's support for the development of the language was channelled.

It was noted that the establishment of BnaG had led to a re-evaluation of CnaG's role. However, BnaG believed that there was still a pressing need to deliver on-the-ground support to the sector and that CnaG was the only body capable of doing so on a sufficiently broad basis to impact on HIE's objectives. The proposed contract therefore focussed on 4 areas of work which reflected specifically on key HIE strategic priorities. The activities to be undertaken, with related outputs and targets, were listed in Appendix 1 of the paper.

A number of issues were raised in discussion focussing on: the proposed contributions from BnaG and the local authorities; the level of publicity given to HIE for its funding of activities; the inflation factor which had helped to determine the sum of £400,000; and the value-for-money review to be undertaken by HIE in 2007-08. After discussion, it was agreed to approve a sum of up to £400,000 towards Comunn na Gaidhlig's delivery of a development programme for Gaelic, to be matched by a similar contribution from Bord na Gaidhlig, subject to the conditions set out in the paper, including the requirement that CnaG participated fully in a value for money review of the HIE/CnaG contract during 2007-08. HIE would also reserve the right to appoint a HIE-nominated Director to the Board. Efforts would be made to increase the level of contributions from local authorities which were low in comparison with the HIE contribution. It was also agreed that dialogue should take place with CnaG about raising HIE's profile in terms of publicity relating to HIE-funded activities carried out by the organisation. Funds to be debited from the Strengthening Communities budget, a quarter of the sum involved to be paid in 2006/07 as a pre-payment from the 2007/08 budget.

2 LEGAL EXPENSES 2006/07 (PCS 38461) (HIE 2006/00657)

It was recalled that the legal budget had been set at £450,000 for the year 2006/07, a reduction on the level set for the previous 3 years. However, this figure had been agreed with the proviso that a further allocation could be made available if required. It was noted that the approved amount had been fully spent as a result of certain high value projects being implemented in the current financial year. As further expenditure was required to meet the legal costs of some significant projects, e.g. South Uist Estate, BSW Sawmills, Cairngorm Estate and Highland Airways before the end of the financial year, approval was given for additional funds of £50,000 to be allocated to Legal Expenses in 2006/07.

A Muirden
8 March 2007