

**CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
STAFFING AND RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE**

FOR INFORMATION

**Title: Update on Staff Consultative Forum and HR Policy
Development**

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Purpose

To update the Committee on key issues arising in Staff Consultative Forum discussions with staff representatives.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to consider the matters discussed by the members of the Staff Consultative Forum.

Executive Summary

The Authority's Staff Consultative Forum has met on a number of occasions since the Committee's last meeting in January 2007. Much of the discussions held have focused on the protracted pay remit negotiations with the Scottish Executive, which were settled in March this year. This paper presents a brief update to the Committee on the other key issues arising, which have included setting out in clearer terms what the redundancy policy would be at CNPA, the introduction of a Cycle To Work Scheme, Childcare Vouchers, and an Employee Assistance Programme.

Update on Staff Consultative Forum and HR Policy Development For Information

Background

1. The Authority's Staff Consultative Forum has met twice since the Committee's last meeting in January 2007. The pay settlement was finally settled in March 2007, with a two year deal agreed for 2006-07 and for 2007-08. This has now been implemented. There has been one meeting of the SCF since the pay was settled where a number of non pay related items were discussed.
2. Full minutes of each of the SCF meetings are appended to this paper for members' information.

Redundancy Policy

3. The CNPA Redundancy Policy/ Procedures was raised by the SCF on 22/5/06 as part of discussions over restructuring the Management Team. At the time there was a request to include a redundancy policy in the staff handbook. Whilst the details of redundancy settlements would not be appropriate, we felt it would be helpful to set out the principles by which CNPA will work if a redundancy situation arises, and the procedures which it will go through. These have been added to the Staff Handbook.

Child Care Vouchers

4. The CNPA has contracted Accor Services to manage our child care voucher scheme. This scheme allows staff to sacrifice a proportion of their salary to be taken as child care vouchers instead. There are tax and NI savings to be made by doing this as tax and NI are deducted after the salary has been reduced, so that tax and NI are not payable on the childcare element of the salary. To date three members of staff have taken up this scheme

Cycle To Work Scheme

5. This scheme allows staff to sacrifice part of their salaries to purchase a bicycle to be used for cycling to and from work, or to use for travel at work. The savings for staff work in the same way as for child care vouchers, with the cycle scheme voucher being a tax free element of salary. To date six staff have taken up this scheme.

Support for Higher/Further Education Courses

6. This forms an extension to the training policy, and would enable CNPA to fairly and objectively assess requests from staff for support in undertaking further and higher

education courses. These courses are typically more expensive than a straightforward training course, and usually have a greater time commitment than a one off training course. CNPA has supported further and higher education courses in the past, and is keen to continue to do so, but there is a need to put in place a more formal system to assess requests and ensure that this is done fairly. CNPA is keen to encourage professional development and formal accreditation of skills, knowledge and experience. Being able to support such study is of benefit to both individual staff and the organisation as a whole.

Employee Assistance Programme

7. CNPA has been able to join in Scottish Executive's contract with ICAS to provide a comprehensive Employee Assistance Programme to all staff and their immediate families (within the same household). This scheme will offer practical help in resolving issues such as consumer issues, family care, financial information/debt management, housing, legal, health and education.
8. They can also offer a confidential counselling service with telephone counselling or access to face to face counselling for up to six sessions per person. This covers a range of issues such as relationships, bereavement, addiction, trauma, family, stress and anxiety. For work related issues ICAS hold a copy of our employment policies and are able to give staff advice on work related issues in line with our own policies and procedures. They are also able to assist managers in looking at ways to resolve particular issues they may have in line management of staff.

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