

**Paper 5**

**Draft Staff Consultative Forum Minutes**

**19 February 2024**



## **For information**

### **Draft minutes of the Staff Consultative Forum**

**Held via MS Teams and in person, Tromie meeting room, Grantown on Spey Office**

**Monday 19 February 2024 at 2.00pm**

#### **Present**

Adam Streeter-Smith  
Charlotte Milburn  
David Cameron  
Derek Ross (Board Member)  
James Lee  
Kate Christie  
Mariaan Pita  
Nasim Mehrabi  
Paul Davison  
Pip Mackie  
Russell Jones (Board Member) (Arrived late)  
Sarah Fletcher

#### **Apologies**

Richard Hardy (Prospect)

#### **Item 1**

##### **Welcome and Apologies**

1. David Cameron (DC) welcomed everyone.
2. Apologies were received from the above.

#### **Item 2**

##### **Review of Minutes of 19 February 2024 Meeting and Matters Arising**

3. Minutes were agreed and action points were reviewed.



## Item 3

### **Paper 1: Organisational Development Strategy 2024 - 27**

4. Kate Christie (KC) introduced the paper and highlighted that the last Organisational Development (OD) Strategy had been developed prior to Covid, since that time much had changed and this new strategy would replace the previous one. The results of the Best Companies survey would continue to be analysed and another survey with staff in salary bands D / E would be carried out to further explore reasons for poorer engagement by this group. We have also established a Culture and values steering group and the existing culture and values were currently being revised and all staff have had the opportunity to be involved. We have also gathered more information from staff through the last two Away Days. All of these information-gathering opportunities have contributed to the development of the Organisation Development and People Strategy (ODPS), which has seven themes, all of which sit within the CNPA's aim of being best small public sector organisation in Scotland. This is now the opportunity for staff consultation on the proposed OD strategy for next two years.
5. KC asked the Staff Consultative Forum (SCF) for feedback.
6. The following points were raised:
  - a) The possibility of an organisation organogram being provided. KC responded that this was currently available on Eolas.
  - b) The need for including Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessments and how they related to hybrid working, including what CNPA do to support people with home working. It was confirmed that this would be included in the facilities section. As an update the Health and Safety Committee (H&S Comm) met in April and had a presentation from the DSE team regarding assessments (including hybrid working). The DSE team were currently overhauling the whole process, and this was due to be relaunched to staff soon.
  - c) The need to include the organisations ongoing commitment to support staff volunteering. This was to be included.
7. DC thanked everyone for the feedback. KC advised was a dynamic document and would be revisited as and when necessary to update.



## Item 4

### Paper 2: Informal Messaging Policy

8. Paul Davison introduced the policy. Two main points were highlighted, that the use of informal messaging is permissible and can be used but any substantial points of record need to be kept in the Electronic Data Management System (EDMS) (Sharepoint), and the use of formal groups (that are used for decision making, including those with external members) need to be logged centrally, as a point of good governance. DC advised that this has been through Senior Management Team (SMT) and had been signed off. DC asked the SCF for feedback.
9. The following points were raised:
  - a) An understanding that some informal messaging groups are time limited and perhaps need to be deleted after a certain period of time. PD responded that this could be included.
  - b) Some members of staff using their personal phones for work purposes. Clarification was sought if this had implications for General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the retention of messages/phone numbers. PD responded that the extent of the personal data is limited (usually name / phone number) but is a consideration for people leaving the organisation. DC advised that a piece of work needed to be carried out regarding exit management procedures for members of staff (parts of this are already underway between the IT and HR team). This policy would apply organisation wide and so would include Board members, DC to speak to Sandy Bremner (Board Convener) regarding Board interactions.
  - c) The possibility of work-related contacts being stored in outlook and therefore linked to the cairngorms.co.uk account. PD responded that this was potentially an option but inevitably names / phone numbers spill into other contact records and it would need to be considered in a wider context.
10. DC thanked everyone and the policy was adopted.

## Item 5

### Paper 3: Chief Planner Pay

11. KC introduced the paper advising that the role of Head of Planning and Chief Planner was currently out for recruitment. The Chief Planner element is a statutory role that all Planning Authorities have to have and therefore a continuity in this role was



critical if the post holder were to leave and as such the role required a three month notice period to ensure that continuity. Given this, SMT had approved that the band max (Band F) would have 5% added to it (to £65,000). This was as specified in the recruitment advert and for transparency purposes the organisation wanted staff to be aware of the rationale for doing this.

12. There was no feedback provided.

## **Item 6**

### **Paper 4: MAD Suggestion Update**

13. It was advised that this paper had been to follow but had been pulled from the agenda due to further information being required.

## **Item 7**

### **Verbal Update: Pay Award 2024 / 25**

14. DC introduced a short-written update highlighting the business case which had now been submitted to Scottish Government (SG). This continued the line of discussion from last year, when it was noted that SG implemented a two-year award for their own staff, whilst CNPA implemented a one-year award. CNPA's current proposal for 24 / 25 was such that when taken together with the 23 / 24 award, closely mirrored SG's two-year position. Nothing had yet been received from SG regarding this proposal but they had now issued the 24 / 25 pay metrics (i.e. the award parameters we are permitted to offer staff). The pay metrics were somewhat less than CNPA had proposed and included in the business case (as submitted) and therefore CNPA were now working with colleagues at SG to explore how best to take this forward. However, given we are seeking more than the metrics permit, it was likely that our existing business case may require further submission to the SG remuneration group, which is somewhat complex and can take considerable time.

15. KC advised that last year's pay award was negotiated with staff and implemented. Implementing the one-year award meant that the Seasonal Rangers could be included. If CNPA had to wait to receive approval for a two-year award, the organisation wouldn't have been in a position to include the Seasonal Rangers, as approvals from SG would not have been given in time to make the award by October. KC advised that CNPA were aware that it was now June and wanted to give update and advise that things are progressing.



16. Feedback was provided as follows:

- a) Clarification was sought that CNPA have submitted a pay award higher than the SG pay metrics. DC advised that this was correct, the business case had been submitted prior to SG issuing this year's pay metrics. Staff would be updated as soon as there was further information.
- b) A request to simplify the pay award paper for staff into key points and post this on Eolas. It was agreed this would be done.

## **Item 8**

### **Discussion: Credit Unions**

17. A staff rep introduced the opportunity that Credit Unions (CU) present to staff and that SG are keen to promote their use. CU are independent savings and loan cooperatives. They can also offer a payroll deduction scheme, which could support staff in terms of budgeting e.g. Christmas savings account and a minimal amount allowed to be saved. They also allow saving with minimal effort and as they are cooperative's any profits go back to members. Given the size of the CNPA it was felt they were worthwhile looking at, especially as some Local Authorities have partnerships with organisations of this type.
18. Clarification was sought that if CNPA were to sign up to a particular CU was the member of staff aware of any mechanisms regarding who we partner with e.g. Highland & Island / Grampian Credit Union etc. The possibility of having to partner with several Credit Unions as it may be dependent on where the member of staff lived. Input would have to be sought from various Credit Union's to ask if they would cover all CNPA area.
19. A staff rep could see the benefits of CU's. However, was not sure that the organisation should be advising staff to use these over other methods of managing money. The presenting member of staff responded that it would not be advising but having as a mechanism (as part of staff benefits) for staff to save and that individuals would make their own decision. It was confirmed that any deductions were from net pay and therefore did not attract any tax savings. DC responded that the CNPA would be explicit that the organisation was not advising or providing advice to staff but stating that it was available should people feel it were appropriate to their circumstances.



20. A staff rep felt that either a range of options should be shown, or no options given at all.

21. DC to consider how to take forward in liaison with the HR team

## **Item 9**

### **Discussion: Health and Safety Update**

22. KC advised that DSE was in the process of being revised how it was carried out. The DSE assessors are Katherine Willing, Laura Byers, Jacki Munro and Sara Denner. A home working DSE assessment including a photo library of equipment and assessment form would be made available via SharePoint soon. A staff rep asked if this would include the level of expenditure permitted for items. KC responded that there would not be a bar set on this as it was very much dependent on individual needs. It was not for staff to purchase their own kit, The approach would be for CNPA to purchase items. This would be based on the DSE assessment that had taken place plus what represented good value for the organisation. It was suggested that staff try new process, as the CNPA wanted staff to work as safely and efficiently as possible. It was confirmed that items for purchase do have to go through DSE team.

23. The Lone Working and Accident / Incident reporting processes will also be going on SharePoint. Once these have been developed and are up and running staff workshops will be held.

24. It was advised that not all line managers are going through the lone work Risk Assessment with their staff and identifying what devices / level of lone working is required for them. More information is now available in the new line manager guidance on Eolas.

25. Weekend lone working in the office was raised. KC responded that this is something that the organisation does not want to encourage staff to do, as there's a need to promote the importance of taking time off, which includes weekends. DC advised that the test of the lone working policy is that it should be generic enough to cover all eventualities of lone working. Rather than focus on specific examples, if staff are at risk of being in a lone working environment, then staff should recognise that position and follow the appropriate process. The new system will be rolled out and tested to ensure that it works for all eventualities.



26. A staff member queried if working alone in the Ballater office was a different situation. KC advised that the lone working policy identifies different procedures for different levels of risk. Lone office working is likely requiring the use of the simplest form i.e. the buddy form as a minimum, as set out in policy.
27. A staff member stated that when working in the office staff are under the auspices of other Health and Safety, and there is a need to be careful that the process is not too onerous with forms etc for an extra hours work, whether that is either early or late. DC advised that there needs to be a reasonable and achievable balance. KC advised that office working has been enhanced with sign in app and when the cleaners lock up, they do a sweep of building. It's very rarely that anyone is in after they have left and that's when the line manager should be aware of late working.

## **Item 10**

### **Discussion: Leadership**

28. DC advised that the final Board Member appointment had now been completed, with Jackie Brierton joining on 01 June.
29. DC also stated that the Board would have input into culture and values work over the Summer.

## **Item 11**

### **Discussion: Equalities**

30. KC advised that an in-person event was to be held with internal inclusion and equality advocacy group. This was to look at membership, terms of reference and the remit of group. The group would seek to be open to people who want to be part of it, rather than prescription from a range of various grades / directorates etc.
31. KC advised that the CNPA would be looking to get Carer Positive accreditation.
32. KC advised that the CNPA had achieved LGBT Youth Charter – Foundation status and the organisation had been recognised for the level of work that had gone into achieving this and identified both the Gender Diversity Policy and the Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) of this policy as exemplars.





33.KC stated that on 22 June there would be the Pride Parade at Inverness, CNPA has registered as an attending group. Anyone can come along and be part of this group, who will be wearing the CNPA purple t-shirts.

## Item 12

### AOB

34.KC advised that there had been two pieces of legislative change which impacted on two existing policies. The necessary changes had now been made to the policies. These had not been brought to SCF as they were not significant changes to the policies and were required by law. The changes were as below:

35.Carers policy: If staff are responsible in caring for someone with a long-term condition, they were entitled to five days unpaid leave. Entitlement to this leave is a “day one” right which means it can be requested from the first date of employment

36.Flexible Working: Staff are now eligible to submit a Flexible Work Request from their first day of employment not after 26 weeks as previously. Staff can also submit two requests per year, as opposed to one previously. Any request has to be dealt with within two months (including appeal time) previously this was three months and line managers must now meet with the member of staff to discuss the request within seven days, instead of 28 days.

37.A staff rep raised an issue regarding the temperature and air flow in extension. DC advised that this would be explored solution in liaison with the Facilities team and reported back to SCF.

**The meeting concluded at 15:22pm.**

Ref	Action	Responsible	Due Date
<b>06.12.21</b> <b>Para 19</b>	Electric Car Salary Sacrifice Scheme Future updates to be brought back to SCF  27.06.22: Finance team looking into and any proposal will be brought to MT 07.11.22: Still progressing 25.01.23: Ongoing	KC	June 22



	<p>20.03.23: Update: Support had been received from NatureScot who had recently launched a similar scheme. Any proposals would go to MT then be brought back to SCF</p> <p>19.06.23: still progressing</p> <p>19.02.24: Craig Lewis from the finance team will come to SMT to give an update.</p> <p><b>12.06.24: Ongoing</b></p>		
<p><b>14.09.23</b> <b>Para 5b</b></p> <p><b>Para 5c</b></p> <p><b>Para 5e</b></p>	<p>Gender Diversity Policy</p> <p>Policy to be reviewed in 12-18 months time</p> <p>Guidance briefing issued to staff inc. there being no hierarchy amongst the protected characteristics,</p> <p>The Dignity at Work policy to be reviewed and brought back to SCF for discussion</p> <p>Addition to Handbook re organisational culture and event organisation.</p> <p>19.02.24: The guidance briefing was issued to staff. Currently updating Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work Policies were in the process of being reviewed.</p> <p><b>12.06.24: Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work Policies still being reviewed.</b></p>	<p>KC</p>	<p>Mar 25 Dec 23</p> <p>Mar 24</p>
<p><b>19.02.24</b> <b>Para 21</b></p>	<p>Internal Recruitment Policy</p> <p>Internal recruitment opportunities not being circulated to be raised with SEPA / NatureScot.</p> <p><b>12.06.24: SEPA requested that the internal recruitment of posts was paused. NatureScot are keen for this to be reinstated, as are CNPA.</b></p>	<p>KC</p>	<p>Jun 24</p>



<b>12.06.24</b>	<b>Informal Messaging Policy:</b>		Sept 24
<b>Para 9b</b>	Exit procedures for staff with phone numbers DC speak to Sandy Bremner re: Board interaction with this policy.	KC DC	
<b>12.06.24</b>	<b>Credit Union</b>		Sept 24
<b>Para 18</b>	To consider how to take forward	DC	
<b>12.06.24</b>	<b>AOB: Temperature in Extension</b>		Sept 24
<b>Para 34</b>	To consider how to take forward	DC / KC	