



Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting

Held at Macdonald Aviemore Highland Resort, Aviemore

In Person

10 March 2023 at 09.00am

Present

Deidre Falconer (Chair)

Xander McDade (Board Convener)

Chris Beattie

Eleanor Mackintosh

In Attendance

Grant Moir, CEO

David Cameron, Head of Corporate Services and Deputy CEO

Louise Allen, Head of Finance

Kate Christie, Head of Operations

Catriona Strang, Clerk to the Board

Apologies

Janet Hunter

Welcome and introduction.

1. The chair welcomed all to the March Resources Committee.

Declarations of interest

2. There were no declarations of Interest.

Minutes from Previous Meeting

3. Minutes from the previous meeting are confidential so this Item was deferred to the end of the meeting.



2022/23 Budget Monitoring

4. Louise Allen, Head of Finance, presented the paper which was a brief overview of the current year, 2022/23 budget monitoring position. Louise highlighted general continuation of financial trends over the period as reported to Committee in previous papers. Overall, the finance team continued to target a financial break-even position for the year, while recognising some risk of an underspend given the scale of financial commitments remaining to be delivered by the end of the year.
5. The Resources Committee discussed the paper and made the following comments:
 - a) A member asked for clarification if the peatland project funding was ringfenced or if any underspend would be reclaimed by Scottish Government. The member also asked if underspend on staff salaries could be used towards pay awards.
 - b) Louise Allen, Head of Finance, confirmed that the any pay awards this year were already covered within the expenditure figures now reported and based on the allowance for pay movements specified by Scottish Government. Pay awards had been covered by the underspend on budgeted staff salaries and some underspend on this budget remained after providing cover for the pay award. The Head of Finance also confirmed that the Scottish Government have been notified of the peatland project underspend, which is a ring-fenced budget provision.
 - c) David Cameron, Head of Corporate Services, confirmed that modelling for next year's pay award has taken place as part of 2023/24 budget development and discussion will commence with Committee on specific provisions for the pay award once information is published on the public sector pay policy for the coming year. Scottish Government are expected to publish future pay policy once other public sector awards have concluded from this year.
 - d) Grant Moir, CEO, confirmed that the peatland project have completed a greater number of hectares of restoration than targeted, but the budget is underspent due to the type of work being done which has been toward the lower end of costs per hectare.
 - e) A member asked if there is an opportunity to use any underspend on additional training programmes.
 - f) The CEO confirmed discussion at Scottish government level has taken place regarding peatland training courses and national qualification courses are now available. Discussions are taking place with Comms team about promotion of the courses.



- g) Head of Corporate Service confirmed in response to a point on the difficulties sometimes in individuals or groups of people accessing training that there was a possibility for groups to seek funding through community led local development funding. Where individuals or organisations perceived access to training as a particular problem there may be merit in making this known to community development organisations such as the Cairngorms Trust to help shape their understanding of needs for deployment of future grant programmes.
 - h) CEO noted the moved away from multiple organisations offering funding for training to more centralised coordination of training and its funding .
6. The Resources Committee is asked to:
- a) Consider the budget management position of 2022/23
 - b) Consider any risks around achieving and outturn within target parameters arising from the current budget monitoring position on which the committee wishes to see specific management action.
7. The committee noted the report and thanked the officers
8. Action Point Arising: none.



2023/24 Budget Development

9. David Cameron, Head of Corporate Services, presented the paper on the 2023/24 budget development. He highlighted the significant increase in grant in aid (para 5) and table 1 and gave an overview of the budget position particularly with regard to key assumptions and estimates used in developing the current budget figures for income and expenditure in 2023/24.

10. The Resources Committee discussed the paper and made the following comments:
 - a) A member noted that the budget had seen a huge increase since the start of the National Park which was seen as an excellent achievement. The member asked why People budget in the operational plan was so low.
 - b) Grant Moir, CEO, responded that the people budget encompassed voluntary and community support and that other elements of work supporting people and communities were within the Place section of the budget.
 - c) David Cameron, Head of Corporate Services, noted that he would amend this section for board presentation to show the fuller breakdown as the Park Authority was expecting additional funding for community development and this will go into the People based element of the Operational Plan.
 - d) The Convener noted and welcomed that the budget has tripled in 5 years and asked officers to confirm reasons for the increase in support and communication budget.
 - e) Head of Corporate Services confirmed there are two significant one off spends for 2023/24 included in this budget making provision for renewal of website and investment in the building and estates including EV charging points and upgrades to audio visual equipment in the main meeting rooms.
 - f) The Convener recommend the inclusion of an infrastructure investment line to the budget summary table show the significant one off costs separately from other support and communications operational plans.
 - g) A member asked if proposed technology upgrade would be in the current year or next year's budget.
 - h) Head of Corporate Services confirmed that as a consequence of supply lead times and the delay in delivery of technology and fitting, the currently delivery time is May 2023.



11. Recommendations

- i) The committee is invited to review the position achieved in development of the 2023/24 financial year budget and provide any feedback to officers prior to the presentation of the budget proposal to the full board on 24 March 2023.

12. The Committee noted the update from officers on the budget development process.

13. **Action Point Arising: present the Infrastructure Investment separately in budget summary table.**

AOCB

Motion to move onto confidential session.