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## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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### FOR DISCUSSION

**Title:** 2022/23 BUDGET MONITORING  
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#### Purpose

This paper presents an overview of the Cairngorms NPA's budget management position as at 31 January 2023, the end of the tenth month of the current financial year

#### Recommendations

The Resources Committee is asked to:

- a) Consider the budget management position for 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.

#### Overview

1. Previous key elements of the in-year financial position are sustained into the current monitoring position. The underspend against the original profile of investment in staff, after the agreed supplementary pay award, remains. Levels of operational plan commitment against expectations also remain low in some areas of activity, as has been common in many years of the park authority's operations.
2. The financial position continues to support projection of a break-even outturn position as targeted in the Authority's approved budget for 2022/23.
3. The detail of the financial monitoring position is set out in Annex One to this paper.

#### Staff and Board

4. December's report noted an expectation that the budget for staff costs would be underspent by £120,000 at the year-end. This expectation remains, such that £120,000 is likely to be available for reallocation to support the operational plan in the final quarter of the year.

#### Programme Management

5. All expected programme management costs have been recovered from external funds as anticipated. There are no budget exceptions to report, and no unanticipated impacts of programme budget management on the central budget for the Park Authority.

### Running costs

6. Overall, running costs are broadly in line with budget expectations. At the end of the current reporting period, there is a small underspend on other staff and board costs offset by overspends on phased budgets at the end of the period on facilities costs, and on IT and professional costs. The overall position for running costs is a small overspend against budget phasing to the end of January.

### Operational Plan

- 7 The operational plan position on budget against actual investment shows a variable position across the park authority's areas of activity. Overall, excluding peatland restoration works, which is underpinned by a separate ring-fenced budget, the position at the end of the monitoring period is some £303,000 under a profiled budget expenditure of £1,740,000.
- 8 Contracts and requisitions continue to be raised, giving some assurance that work continues at a pace that will bring overall budget positions closer to the outturn expectation by the end of the financial year.

### Peatland Programme

- 9 The position against the peatland programme remains particularly low for actual cash expenditure in comparison with full year budget. Nevertheless, capital commitments stand at just under £2m. Best endeavours are being made to encourage claims against these commitments.  
While remaining below phased expenditure expectations at this point in the financial year, the management accounts to the end of January 2023 do show an increase in cash expenditure on grant claims of almost £1 million from the position last reported to the Committee as at the end of October 2022.
- 10 A further review of the position of the programme has revealed the potential to rephase upward of £300,000 of this budget into future years. We will engage with the Scottish Government team managing this area of work and budget on this matter.
- 11 The target area for restoration in the financial year will be achieved or exceeded despite the lower than forecast expenditure.

### Other Considerations

- 12 No programme or project management impacts on the Park Authority's core budget have been identified. There are no unanticipated calls on financial resources created

by the Park Authority's leadership or accountable body roles for these programmes and projects.

- 13 The only impact on income levels is from other, non-grant income from planning fees, other recharged costs and contributions received toward core expenditure. This income position is £52,000 below the phased budget for the reporting period. As previously reported, there remains some risk that the full budget level will not be realised by the end of the financial year. Overall this risk can be managed within the wider budget position.

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