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# CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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## MINUTES OF THE CONFIDENTIAL BOARD MEETING held by telephone/ video conference on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021 at 12noon.

### PRESENT

*(By video conferencing unless stated otherwise)*

Xander McDade (Convener)

Geva Blackett

Peter Argyle

Deirdre Falconer

Pippa Hadley

Janet Hunter

John Kirk

John Latham

Douglas McAdam

Eleanor Mackintosh

Willie McKenna

Ian McLaren *until 1.20pm*

Dr Fiona McLean

William Munro

Anne Rae Macdonald

Dr Gaener Rodger

Derek Ross

Judith Webb

### In Attendance:

Grant Moir, Chief Executive,

David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services

Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning & Place

Dr Peter Mayhew, Director of Nature & Climate Change

Andy Ford, Head of Conservation

Dan Harris, Development Planning Manager

Gavin Miles, Head of Strategic Planning

**Apologies** Carolyn Caddick

### NPPP 2022-2027 Draft for Consultation (Paper 5)

1. Grant Moir, CEO introduced paper 5 which presents the draft NPPP 2022-2027 for Consultation.
2. Oliver Davies, Head of Communications and Engagement provided an update on the informal consultations success on reaching the hard to reach communities:
  - a) targeted quarter of a million people so far reached.
  - b) Toolkit of campaign materials.
  - c) 400 total responses.
  - d) Headlines 92% broadly agreed themes and 80% that local communities have important part to play.

- e) Other main headlines coming through are support for the major themes of woodland expansion peatland restoration, protecting interests and jobs.
3. Gavin Miles, Head of Strategic Planning provided the following points regarding the evidence base back up Strategic Environmental Assessment and carbon baseline work:
- a) information on snow on Cairngorm and deer report in easily summarised form
  - b) Residents and visitors (staying in NP) carbon footprint would be considered
  - c) Important to note it's a complicated picture, agree big numbers and its complicated.
4. Head of Communications and Engagement gave an outline of the plan from 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021:
- a) Engagement activities will switch from informal to formal
  - b) Working with an agency to make as much content digital, as easy to navigate as possible, with images and case studies and comments from informal phase, while confirming material will not only be digital.
  - c) To tackle non digital audience: plans are for phone and hardcopy options and freepost address and posters in community noticeboards and coffee shops, while open for further suggestions.
  - d) Interviews offered with minority groups and community councils to discuss NPPP.
5. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
- a) Clarification sought around putting out for consultation. What if something new becomes a real issue during the consultation? Do we have to go back out to consultation? Can we include something we haven't consulted on? CEO advised that if for example a big issue arose in January next year, as long as we have the discussion in public at the right meeting then it can be included in NPPP. We wouldn't have to go back out to consultation for it to be included.
  - b) In the conduct of the NPPP development process can officers ensure that the board has a clear awareness of organisations, groups and individuals who have been consulted, together with information on the points raised in discussions, in order that members are able to help identify any potential gaps in engagement and understand the views put forward by consultees? The CEO confirmed that significant stakeholder consultation has taken place and more is planned. The information on the range of contacts made by the Authority and those who had responded who have not sought anonymity will be made available to the board as the process evolves.
  - c) Query around the objective for woodland expansion without fencing, what evidence makes the case there shouldn't be any fencing? The objective is for a majority without fencing. Fencing does give land owners security and comfort around woodland expansion and funding available but there are opportunities to increase natural regeneration which has added benefits.
  - d) Comment made that using deer density target was too blunt a tool. Deer sector wants to focus impacts and there is concern about putting density targets into the Plan. CEO advised that there are 35k red deer in NP and that over the next 25 years the proposal is to reduce this to around 20k red deer. There is a close link to the proposals in the plan and national policy direction

- as set out in deer review. This reduction in deer numbers will help peatland restoration, woodland expansion etc. and we need to get the right balance.
- e) Regarding gamebird management and muirburn: as evidence is lacking the Authority should gather evidence first of any impact of game birds; and also ensure muirburn is conducted to best practice and not necessarily to reduce muirburn.
  - f) Plea made to ensure we see support for current economy and current role of land managers, talking about new opportunities not at expenses of existing people's job.
  - g) CEO commented that ecological restoration doesn't mean leaving alone and not doing something in that place. There is good evidence around ecological restorations and jobs e.g. Glenfeshie.
  - h) Ecological works cost big money which many land owners cannot afford. Worry about water being left on the hill through peatland restoration. On river management we need to look at trees cleared from river banks, important to farmers and to be kept well maintained in future. Must have trees that next generation can have; firebreaks should be put in; planting in agriculture land should not happen and we need to safeguard arable and agricultural land in NP. Need to take local people along with you in order for it to work. CEO advised that on peatland works one of the main points is that restored peatland stores more water preventing flooding etc. On jobs there is a big opportunity going forward to make sure that local people benefit from this work in the Park.
  - i) Question asked about whether the CNPA need to follow Scottish Government policy for example on red grouse, which was confirmed as the case. CEO reminded members that the Authority are a NDPB of Scottish Government and that we will be working to help implement the Grouse Management Review.
  - j) Plea made for Cairngorms Connect and ECMP to monitor the same species so we can see what thrives where?
  - k) Comment made that woodland expansion was a long term vision of SG, could it be explained why are we going beyond where Government is going for the nation as a whole? Board Convener explained that the NP has lower average woodland cover than Scotland as a whole. CEO advised that Forestry Strategy was approved by the Board 2 years ago; we have a good evidence base; and we are helping deliver the national targets. We have pragmatic plan that brings coherence to this agenda.
  - l) Comment made that it was about striking the right balance and listening to all views. Need to be upfront and honest, with evidence about all elements of NPPP.
  - m) Clarity sought on who ultimately has the final say? Board Convener confirmed that the Board will consider responses from consultation before the final draft NPPP for ministers is prepared.
  - n) Praise for the consultation from a member.
  - o) Comment made to endorse the draft given urgency of situation. The CNPA need to demonstrate leadership. Great to see Equalities Advisory Panel comments have been taken on board in the draft.
  - p) Comment made that it was good to see housing issues in the plan. Those who work and live in NP should not be disadvantaged by virtue of the fact it is a NP. Head of Strategic Planning advised that relating to housing, intend to use number

of things such as short term lets and licensing as one way of dealing with these issues.

- q) Regarding the plan hierarchy: is the Forest Strategy correctly named? CEO explained that the term forest strategy is used across Scotland.
- r) With regards to the increase of the use of public transport & bikes on public transport: how are we going to have these discussions with operators etc.?
- s) Comment made that there were already too many visitors
- t) CEO asked about ensuring a glossary of terms. CEO agreed to this.
- u) Impressed with what was planned for the consultation to reach some audiences we haven't reached so far. It is clearly marked as draft as it doesn't have all the answers. It is a coherent, evidence based, robust draft. We will consider the views that come back and ultimately decide as a board what goes ahead into the final plan. CEO agreed we want to try and get views from people not heard from before.
- v) Comment made that there had not really been any significant changes to narrative to last time the Board discussed it, choices of impacts have been added. Acknowledge work by staff.
- w) Comment made that it was good that questions are limited so people do not get bamboozled. Should have question asking – 'do you agree with long term vision proposed?'
- x) With reference to AI looking to go to net zero by 2045, suggestion made to make it clear an estimate what our current footprint is, show what the position is today and this is what we are looking to get to.
- y) How does this tie in with AI5, exporting carbon credits outwith the Park, huge issue and very complex. Need to make sure we have a clear position around this.
- z) Comment made that they didn't feel sufficient data on gamebird releases was available and don't think it's appropriate for it to be included.
- aa) C8 identified max 15% of all housing stock. Need to have a definition of short term lets. High level regional land use framework but no mention of food & drink and the contribution it makes.
- bb) CEO explained that the evidence papers will provide the baseline data for the Park. It is important that we include gamebirds and that we do look at what a sustainable model looks like. Food production has been added to A8. The CEO restated this is the draft for consultation not the final plan. Head of Strategic Planning advised on the numbers of second homes and holiday lets in the NP.
- cc) Comment made that if the figures are in evidence paper then that's fine. We are being asked to endorse this targets. A5 suggests we will licensing gamebirds? CEO advised that they would look at the powers that NPA may have around this but what we are looking at is what the sustainable management is of gamebirds looks like.
- dd) Question raised around the process who advises SG? CEO advised that all consultation responses would be collated and a consultation report produced. The board will then consider it and submit a final draft to ministers for approval. Scottish Ministers advised by civil servants and also the CNPA.
- ee) The Board Convener encouraged Board members to engage within their own networks/ communities to respond to this, long term future direction of the NP.
- ff) Board Convener advised that he would seek to engage with new minister to ensure they are aware of the process we are going through.

- gg) Comment made by a number of members that they were reassured by the process and happy to be getting opportunity to discuss this again when consultation ends.
- hh) Confirmed that the recording of this discussion will be put into public domain on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021.

- 6. The Board Convener proposed a motion to approve the NPPP for consultation. This was seconded by Judith Webb. The Board agreed:**
- a) To consult on the draft National Park Partnership Plan 2022 – 2027 (Annex 3).**
  - b) That the consultation lasts from 23rd September to 17th December 2021**

- 7. Action Point Arising: None.**

**The meeting concluded at 13.45.**