



## For discussion

**Title:** Cairngorms 2030 programme update  
Quarter three 2024 (July- September)

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### Strategic context

1. Cairngorms 2030 (C2030) will inspire people and communities in the National Park to act and tackle the nature and climate crisis. Bringing together 20 long-term projects on transforming landscapes, empowering communities, rethinking how we travel and championing wellbeing.
2. The Park Authority was awarded £12.5 million by The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) to develop and deliver Cairngorms 2030 and become the UK's first net zero national park. The five-year delivery phase commenced in January 2024.

### Purpose

3. This paper presents the status of programme management, including risk management status, based on information in project reports for the period from July to September 2024, updated where appropriate to reflect current position as at the time of writing, and the planned work to end December 2024.

### Recommendations







4. The Performance committee is asked to discuss:
  - a) Programme risk level remains at amber due to the delay in receiving Sustrans Places for Everyone design funding. The delivery risk will likely remain at this level until end March 2025.
  - b) A revised programme cash flow forecast has been prepared, which is showing a temporary £1.2 million income shortfall. This shortfall will be resolved in the next financial year when transport funding is expected to be reinstated.
  - c) A £600,000 funding application to Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) is proceeding with the Initial Strategic Assessment approved by HIE on 11 November 2024. The formal application and due diligence process has commenced.



- d) Azets Ltd have undertaken an internal governance and risk reporting audit of the Cairngorms 2030 programme. The performance committee Chair was interviewed as part of that process and the findings will be reported to Audit and Risk Committee and covered subsequently at Performance Committee.

## Strategic risk management

### Performance Dashboard: Programme level (see Annex 1 for projects)

Performance Measure	Red Amber Green (RAG) status	Issue / mitigation
Programme risk profile	Amber 	Risk profile remains at amber following notification from Sustrans Scotland that design stage funding was not available in 2024 / 2025.  Revised cash flow submitted to NLHF and both parties accept risk profile will remain at amber until next financial year.
Future funding profile	Amber 	Risk profile remains static.  Discussions continue with Scottish Government and Transport Scotland on importance of releasing funds as soon as possible to allow design work to commence
Finance: impact on Park Authority budget management	Green 	No issues current or projected in 2024 / 2025. The potential financial implications for C2030 programme delivery will be a key element of 2025 / 2026 budget scenario plans as board and management consider deployment of financial allocations for the next financial year.
Procurement	Green 	Procurement standards and project initiation approvals are being revised to improve compliance and decision making.
Staffing	Green 	No issues.
Delivery of Sustrans funded projects	Amber 	Sustrans / active travel match funding for the programme is not secured at the values or within the timelines required to achieve project objectives.



			Active Communities project risk profile remains at amber and project deliverables have been amended
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## Stakeholder engagement

### 5. Press releases

- a) [Interview with Andy Toop, founder of the SPIN Project in Aviemore, a community-focused initiative](#) which aims to make bikes accessible to everyone and aid in reducing emissions, working towards the Cairngorms National Park being net zero by 2030 (Cycle friendly Cairngorms).
- b) [Interview with Outdoor Community Activities Organiser, Andy Millar at the Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre \(Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre\).](#)
- c) [Interview with Green Health Link Worker Louise Emslie about connecting with nature \(Public Health and the Outdoors\).](#)
- d) [Interview with teacher Sophia about community garden at Alford Academy \(Climate Learning and Education\).](#)

### 6. Cairn Magazine

- a) Cairn magazine was not published within this time frame.

### 7. Other press activity

- a) As part of the National Lottery thirtieth birthday celebrations Sandy Bremner, Convener of our Board, was interviewed by Talk TV and the Scottish Sun to talk about C2030.

### 8. Social media summary of connections:

- a) Total engagements - that is people who have liked, shared and interacted with materials - of all C2030 activity across social media: 2,845. Social media activity in this period has centred around local engagement and consultation event promotion as well as the sharing of Cairngorms Voices blogs. We also shared an interview with our Convener Sandy Bremner as part of the National Lottery's thirtieth birthday celebrations. In addition to the above, we shared:
  - i. Promotion of artwork delivered to Speyside Community High School (Climate learning and education)
  - ii. World Alzheimer's Day (Outdoor dementia resource centre)
  - iii. Promotion of Riverwoods film screening (Climate conscious communities)



9. A summary of the social media activity is given in the following reports:

- a) [August Comms Update.pptx](#)
- b) [September Comms Update.pptx](#)

10. Volunteer activity

- a) Volunteer Rangers continue to support the delivery of projects which have been established because of Cairngorms 2030. For example, seven Volunteer Rangers have supported the delivery of the John Muir Award at the Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre, whilst other members of the team are surveying bumblebee transects in support of the Cairngorms Future Farming project.
- b) As projects continue to take shape and begin to deliver, the Volunteering Manager is working in partnership and coordination with the Cairngorms 2030 Engagement Team to begin structured and detailed conversations with project leads to help them shape their plans for volunteer involvement for the duration of the programme. This will include mapping opportunities for volunteer involvement and exploring in detail why project leads might seek to involve volunteers, and which audiences and populations would be most important to involve. It will include drafting timelines and resourcing plans and developing resources to support Project Leads or partners in delivering volunteer days where appropriate.
- c) Mapping of Volunteer Ranger activities onto C2030 outcomes is currently under way to allow for accurate reporting of current activity and informed projections of the scale of future activity.
- d) The volunteering team is currently exploring the possibility of developing a 'family volunteering' programme to allow a more inclusive volunteering offer. We are currently at the information gathering stage, engaging with all UK National Park Authorities to learn from best practice elsewhere and develop proposals for potential models which could facilitate increased family volunteering in support of Cairngorms 2030 and wider Park Authority outcomes.



## Theme lead highlights

### 11. Transforming landscapes

- a) Five of the projects have a risk status of green with two at amber. These are due to the Peatland staffing level having an impact upon Geographic Information System (GIS) data production for grant funding and development of future projects. Mitigation is in place for both. In addition, within the catchment project the ongoing concern about the Dalgetty plain element remains. This is now being explored through conversations with the local community.
- b) Projects to deliver two deer larders have proceeded with delivery partners in place.
- c) The Peatland restoration project is likely to exceed its 1,500 hectares (ha) target for 2024 / 2025.
- d) The risk register shows little change with all risks being monitored carefully. A new risk (nature recovery) reflects the uncertainty over the willingness of landowners to engage in provision of community benefits. However, we shall be working to support them during the project development at the Expression of Interest (EOI) stage and beyond.

### 12. Empowerment

- a) This quarter has been the busiest so far, balancing the continuing establishment of a new engagement team with the delivery of a programme of events across the geography of the Park. Progress has also been made on innovative methods, from gamification to lived experience panel. The tender for consultant, helping establish which method of participatory democracy is pursued for the community managed climate grants is being finalised by the team and expected to go out to procurement in late November or early December.
- b) Interest is growing in the Learning for Sustainability for Schools education project, and potential non-partner organisations coming on board. Feedback from the schools has been universally positive, with the highlight this quarter being showcasing school pupil developed videos during Climate Week.
- c) We have been negotiating between the various Climate Hubs to develop Memorandum of Understanding and activity plans, establishing future partnership delivery. A successful event during Climate week was an excellent opportunity to collaborate between projects, showcasing videos developed by young people.

### 13. Transport

- a) The uncertainty with regards to funding of the design of proposed infrastructure improvements remains a risk to delivery.



- b) While delays and cuts to government funding have impacted project programmes, project work continues to develop design of infrastructure.
- c) Significant progress has been made in terms of partnerships and specifying work packages for collaboration. Expect more tangible progress during quarter four.
- d) Partnership working and collaboration with Transport Authorities including The Highland Council and Aberdeenshire Council continues to improve.
- e) There is an improving situation overall with commitments to expenditure beginning to arise albeit later than expected.
- f) Procurement for a package of Community-led Cycling Initiatives in Badenoch and Strathspey was designed and will be delivered via a new Community Transport Grant from quarter four. This includes the locations for the first community led cycle hubs.

#### 14. Health and Wellbeing

- a) The numbers of participants in the Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre activity programme goes from strength to strength. To date 1250 people have taken part.
- b) The work of the Public Health and the Outdoors Project Team continues to rigorously test the working model of the project and identifying areas of work that need to be undertaken or changed.
- c) Both green health projects continue to develop collaborations and connections with C2030 projects and external partners that will be pivotal in the continued success and legacy of this groundbreaking work.
- d) Long term planning discussions have commenced between the Park Authority, NHS Highland and Alzheimer Scotland.

#### 15. Recruitment

- a) The Scottish Land Commission has advertised its vacant Cairngorms 2030 post. The Community Benefits from Nature Adviser is expected to be appointed by end of 2024.

#### 16. Governance

- a) The NLHF monitoring meeting took place on 05 November 2024, covering project reporting which has also informed this report.
  - i. Programme delivery risk was accepted as amber.
  - ii. Cash flow position was approved and follow up meeting to review match income reporting was arranged.
  - iii. Approval granted to launch a £150,000 Community Transport Grant Scheme.



- iv. Approval granted on the proposed allocation of £1.5 million Nature Networks project.
- v. Approval to grant award Glenmore Cycle Hub – proposal to issue a £20,000 grant award to Aviemore Glenmore Community Trust.
- b) The next Programme Board meeting will be held on 04 December 2024
- c) Azets Ltd have undertaken an internal governance and risk reporting audit of the Cairngorms 2030 programme. The performance committee Chair was interviewed as part of that process and the findings will be reported to Audit and Risk Committee and covered subsequently at Performance Committee.

#### 17. Budget and cash flow

- a) A revised programme cash flow forecast has been prepared, which is showing a temporary £1.2 million income shortfall. This shortfall will be resolved in the next financial year when transport funding is expected to be reinstated
- b) A £600,000 funding application to Highlands and Islands Enterprise is proceeding with the Initial Strategic Assessment approved by HIE on 11 November 2024. The formal application and due diligence process has commenced.

#### 18. Procurement

- a) Procurement standards and project initiation approvals are being revised to improve compliance and decision making.
- b) Grant award or service contract awards approved
  - i. Nature recovery project: two Larder projects.
  - ii. Engagement project: Lived experience panel appointment of consultant.
  - iii. Edinburgh University – Socioeconomic research and music

#### 19. Legal agreements

- a) MORAY Climate Action Network Memorandum of Understanding signed
- b) NESCAN Climate Hub Memorandum of Understanding signed

#### 20. Programme delivery actions to end December 2024

- a) 29 October - Community engagement roadshow – Kingussie
- b) 30 October - Highland Council strategic transport meeting
- c) November - Edinburgh University – Gamification / Community engagement grant award signed
- d) November - Programme governance audit recommendations
- e) 05 November - NLHF quarterly performance review
- f) December - Nature recovery – Deer Management Groups EOI assessment





- g) 04 December - NLHF Budget monitoring meeting
- h) 04 December - C2030 Programme board meeting
- i) 05 December - End year review – staff feedback session

#### 21. Significant Programme Change Requests

- a) None

#### 22. Significant Budget Adjustments

- a) A revised programme cash flow forecast has been prepared, which is showing a temporary £1.2 million income shortfall. This shortfall will be realised in the next financial year when transport funding is reinstated.

### Conclusions

#### 23. Performance Overview and Matters Meriting Strategic Review

- a) Programme risk level remains at amber due to the delay in receiving Sustrans Places for Everyone design funding. NLHF accepts that the delivery risk will remain at this level until end March 2025.
- b) A revised programme cash flow forecast has been prepared, which is showing a temporary £1.2 million income shortfall. This shortfall will be resolved in the next financial year when transport funding is expected to be reinstated.
- c) A £600,000 funding application to Highlands and Islands Enterprise is proceeding with the Initial Strategic Assessment approved by HIE on 11 November 2024. The formal application and due diligence process has commenced.
- d) Other than for exceptions highlighted in this programme update, the component projects have made reasonable or substantial progress over the period to the end of the third quarter.
- e) A forward-looking indication of future activity is provided in the separate milestone update which is on the agenda for information.

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**27 November 2024**

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