
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING **held in the The Malt Loft Room, Glenlivet Distillery, Glenlivet** **on Friday 14th June 2019 at 11.00am**

PRESENT

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Peter Argyle | Anne Rae Macdonald |
| Geva Blackett (Deputy Convener) | Eleanor Mackintosh |
| Carolyn Caddick | Xander McDade (Convener) |
| Deirdre Falconer | Willie McKenna |
| Pippa Hadley | Ian McLaren |
| Janet Hunter | Dr Fiona McLean |
| John Kirk | Dr Gaener Rodger |
| John Latham | Derek Ross |
| Douglas McAdam | Judith Webb |

In Attendance:

Grant Moir, Chief Executive
Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning & Rural Development
David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services
Pete Mayhew, Director of Conservation & Visitor Experience
Andy Ford, Cairngorms Nature Manager
Margaret Smith, PA to CEO, Convener and Director of Corporate Services
Dee Straw, Planning Administration and Systems Officer
Nick Halfhide, Director of Sustainable Growth, Scottish Natural Heritage **Items 1- 7 only**
John Risby, Conservator Highlands and Islands, Scottish Forestry **Items 1- 7 only**
Janelle Clark, Area Manager (Marr), Aberdeenshire Council **Items 1- 7 only**
Chris Taylor, Regional Partnerships Director, VisitScotland **Items 1- 7 only**
Rhona Fraser, Head of Strengthening Communities and Regional Development – Inner
Moray Firth, Highlands and Islands Enterprise **Items 1- 7 only**

Apologies: William Munro

Welcome and Introduction

1. Xander McDade the Convener, welcomed everyone to the meeting in Glenlivet.

2. Apologies were noted for William Munro.

Declarations of Interest

3. Declarations of interest were invited. There were no interests declared.

Minutes of Last Meeting held on 29 March 2019 – for approval

4. The draft Minutes of the last meeting held on 29 March 2019 were agreed with the following amendments:
 - a) At Para 11(e) – Word “Chair” should be deleted and not left with a strike through.
 - b) Confidential minutes were agreed as accurate.

Matters Arising

5. None.
6. **Action Points Arising:** **None**

CEO Report and Convener Update (Paper 1)

7. Grant Moir, Chief Executive, introduced Paper 1 which highlights the main strategic work streams that are being directed by Management Team. He highlighted the following 3 areas:
 - a) **Cairngorms Nature Big Weekend** - number up again this year.
 - b) **Vista Project by SSE** – pylons to be taken out over next couple of years.
 - c) **Wildcat Project** - good news regarding more funding coming into Park for this project.
8. The Board considered the detail of the paper and discussed the following points:
 - a) **Active Aviemore** – question was raised regarding what was being done in terms of explaining to public how the funds were being spent. CEO responded that lots of drop in sessions for public had been and will continue to be held.
 - b) **Resources** – a member brought up the fact that there were struck and very impressed with regard to just how many different projects involving staff were being done, and asked if this was sustainable. CEO and Director of Corporate Services responded that staff are trying to deliver against the NPPP and not overstretch too much. Senior managers are also reinforcing through Management Team that staff must prioritise projects to make room for the more important ones, dropping or delaying some if necessary.

- c) **Upland Advisory Group** – the question of All Terrain Vehicle use was raised, with response that this subject is included in the Wild Deer Best Practice Group. A sub-group has been set up to look at this and try to bring all the best practice together.
- d) **Stakeholder Engagement** – discussions held with Police Scotland on Raptor tracker project, wildlife crime and special constables. Meeting with Scottish Land and Estates who have had many staff changes so trying to re-establish link with them.
- e) **Scottish Environment Link** – meeting held with the new CEO to establish what their priorities are for the coming year.
- f) **Climate change** – In discussion around the Authority's response to the climate emergency, the Board considered whether a paper go to the September Board regarding the Scottish Government Climate Change agenda. It was noted that this paper may be more feasible for presentation to the December Board.

9. **The Board noted the paper.**

10. **Action Point arising:**

- i. **Paper on response to climate change emergency to December Board meeting.**

National Park Partnership Plan Progress Report 18/19 (Paper 2)

11. Grant Moir, Chief Executive introduced Paper 2 which sets out the Authority's vision and overarching strategy for managing the Cairngorms National Park. He highlighted the following:
- a) **Peatland restoration** – just applied for a further 1000 ha to be added, should hear about results within the next few weeks.
 - b) **Designated sites** – slight increase in sites in favourable condition.
 - c) **Visitor experience targets** – visitor numbers increased for east side of the Park. Snow roads promotions and investment into Ballater increasing as a result.
 - d) **Visitor data** - should have good data by next year.
 - e) **Volunteer rangers** - will meet target easily by next year.
 - f) **Rural development** – permission for 108 affordable houses – should reach the target by end of planning period.
 - g) **Broadband** – Cairngorms community broadband project was shelved but Scottish Government working on the new “Reaching 100% / R100” broadband infrastructure project. Further details updating on progress with R100 delivery will follow in due course.

12. Presentations were given by:

- a) Nick Halfide, SNH gave a short presentation on SHN delivery of the Park Plan partnership.
- b) John Risby, Scottish Forestry. Reported on forestry in Scotland and forestry targets contributing positively to delivery of NPP Plan.
- c) Janelle Clark, Aberdeenshire Council gave a short presentation on actions taken by AC on the delivery of the NPP Plan.
- d) Rhona Fraser, HIE gave a short presentation on what HIE and Inner Moray Firth do in the Park. HIE's new strategy has now been released.
- e) Chris Taylor, VisitScotland gave a short presentation on where the NP fits in with tourism around Scotland and wider, and how VisitScotland strategy fits in the NPP Plan.

13. Xander McDade thanked all the presenters and opened the floor to the Board for any questions. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and asked for some of the points in the presentations to be clarified.

- a) Question was asked about affordable housing and in particular empty rural housing. Government statement came out yesterday regarding funding to take forward rural housing projects. This is a very difficult area especially taking into account holiday letting which take in more money. Should rural properties be looked at differently to housing in towns and villages? Work with partners needs to be done to resolve this.
- b) Woodland Carbon units – would this have a greater role in the future? In discussion it was noted that hopefully this would be the case, but still some issues round the mechanisms and how it is delivered. Could this be facilitated by the Park to help unlock the money which is available for funding?
- c) Difficult for upland estates to get funding – what options are available to help them to get grants. Target grant is helping an introduction of a higher rate for deer fencing which helps with the cost. Park needs to look into how the new Forestry Strategy can be used to implement the CNPA Forest Strategy.

**Strategic Risk Management and Monitoring Corporate Performance
(Paper 3)**

14. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services, introduced the paper which presents an update on the Authority's performance to date in working towards delivery of strategic objectives established in the 2018 to 2022 Corporate Plan. The paper focuses on delivery against the Key Performance Indicators and also presents the latest version of the Strategic Risk Register.

15. KPI regarding Community working has been achieved early. This is due to the

LEADER programme, which delivers the majority of new entrants to community led development action, coming toward a conclusion and data being available at a relatively early stage of the Corporate Plan period.

16. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following issues:
- a) Annex 2 page 2 – John Muir Awards – do we know if the 20% of those from disadvantaged background had been achieved – this information to be circulated to Members.
 - b) Annex 2 – business satisfaction with CNPA – comments geared towards how CNPA does against other business bodies but not our own satisfactions. Quarterly trend is available which will can be given to Board regarding our CNPA business satisfaction. MF will be sending this round when it is available.
 - c) KPI No 1 – should this be green or should it be amber. Feeling is that as half way through the year we are on target but acknowledged this might change over the coming years. Staff are asked to make a commitment and go with green if they realistically believe they are on track and will deliver against target.
 - d) Annex 2 – noted staff turnover high. Members recognised a degree of turnover was good to allow fresh ideas and skills to come into the organisation while recognising potential service disruption of high turnover is maintained over a longer period of time. More widely, members noted from Chair of Staffing and Recruitment Committee that health and safety issues to be brought to S&R Committee who will then inform the Board as appropriate.
 - e) Wildlife Crime Incidents still red – does the numbers include birds which have disappeared as well as those involving crime? This covers those where a bird has disappeared in suspicious circumstances.
 - f) Business satisfaction – information gathered from CBP but not all businesses members of CBP. Is there another way of gathering more information? Not at the moment without deploying significant additional resources, but this is believed to be an example of satisfaction which is reasonably representative of sentiment with an acceptable survey response rate, so valid to be used for our permanence management data. A business barometer is available from VisitScotland.
 - g) Mountains and People – mountain path progress – suggestion made to look at Norway Project regarding Sherpas helping with sorting paths. This could be utilised in CNPA. Gap in the funding is being looked at by OATS Board to ensure that it is plugged before the end of the project.
 - h) Wildlife crime – A member asked about the resources to attend a wildlife crime incident. Officers present responded that speed and visibility of response from police is something which is important. Working really closely with the police on this subject. New Tracker will hopefully help to pinpoint when crime takes place.

17. **The Board noted the paper.**

18. **Action point arising:**

- i. **Circulate information on socio-economic background of John Muir Award participants**

Standing Orders (Paper 4)

19. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services, introduced the paper which presents further revisions to the Authority's Standing Orders following the Board's consideration of a revised draft at its meeting in March 2019.

20. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:

- a) Planning Standing Orders will need to be looked at regarding tying up to ensure effective interaction with the Board Standing Orders.
- b) Paragraph 9 – regarding quorum – this needs to be tied up with the Planning Standing Orders.

21. **The Board agreed the paper.**

22. **Action point arising:**

- i. **Review Planning Committee Standing Orders**

Cairngorms LEADER Programme Update (Paper 5)

23. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services, introduced the paper which presents an update on the delivery of the Cairngorms LEADER Programme, following the Cairngorms Local Action Group's (CLAG's) full commitment of the LEADER grant funding allocation made available to it by Scottish Government. The team will give a presentation to a future meeting.

24. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:

- a) Annex I Page 13 – Members asked how the CLAG might target delivery of the monitoring indicators that are red and not being delivered at the moment. Director of Corporate Services responded that it is the applicant that picks the most appropriate KPIs for their project to deliver and while the team encourages

- b) Rural Transport in Cairngorms and Kilkenny – how is this project going? Rural transport very difficult in lots of areas. How can better links be achieved? Applicants were asked to come forward to propose an application within the theme of transport and connectivity but none came forward, so Cairngorms Trust now working with Kilkenny LEADER to try to get ideas to help alleviate this. Funding has now been secured to look into this and work is being done to try to get partners to take part in this as well.
- c) Acknowledgement made of how well the LEADER project was being done and this should work and achievement should be commended and the Board's position on this update should be changed accordingly.
- d) No applications from the Angus Glens – is this due to lack of promotion of the process. David responded that the Chair of Group is from the Angus Glens area and the CLAG had been trying to encourage applications from this area, in addition to undertaking animation work in the early stages of the programme to encourage applications to come forward. Contact also made with Angus LEADER Group on potential for cooperation projects, however there were insufficient common priority areas to allow an effective project to be identified.

26. **Action Point Arising:** **None.**

27. Andy Ford, Head of Conservation, introduced the paper which updated the Board on the Progress of the Cairngorms Capercaillie Project. Lottery funding is not the only part of this project as there are lots of factors at play. Too simplistic to stay that there is only one problem and one solution.

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following:

- a) Page 3 A15 Para 9 under reputation – why is affordable housing showing as a risk. David explained that this section of the paper highlighted the strategic risks that our work in developing joint working across all 15 NPs helps to mitigate. Housing was mentioned as a part of a wider risk around one-off incidents impacting on the Authority's reputation. The wider promotional coverage through collective action on the work of NPs, including the Cairngorms, could help significantly in mitigating reputational impacts of one-off negative, local coverage.
- b) Procurement – has there been any work been done regarding procuring IT etc. rather than just for sponsorship between NPS. This had been done in some areas, especially in bi-lateral areas such as CNPA/Loch Lomond and the Trossachs NP procurement within Scotland. Also looking into shared procurement with other partners rather than just other NPs. The paper highlighted that some joint procurement had been undertaken through collaborative activity between all UK NPs. However, this has been relatively limited as a consequence of variations in local joint working arrangements.

33. **The Board agreed to the recommendations as set out in the paper.**

34. **Action Point Arising:** **None.**

Board Fees Policy (Paper 8)

35. This paper was deferred to discuss on another day when more time was available to allow a full discussion.

AOCB

36. **Governance Group: Terms of Reference**

- a) Comprising Chairs of Committees to look at improvements to the way governance arrangements are handled, to meet as required.
- b) Quorum – this to be changed to 4 from 3.

37. **Planning Bill** – Grant Moir told the Board that the Planning Bill was coming back to parliament shortly – 230 amendments at the moment but Government are looking to bring this down. Need to keep an eye on call-in powers to see how this will affect the CNPA.

38. **Action Point Arising:** **None.**

Date of Next Meeting

39. Next formal Board meeting to be held on 20 September 2019, CNPA Office, Grantown on Spey.
40. The Public part of this meeting concluded at 13.45.