



Draft minutes of the Staff Consultative Forum

Held at Cairngorms National Park Authority office, Grantown-on-Spey

Hybrid

12 March 2025 at 02.00pm

Present

Adam Streeter-Smith

Brenna Jessie

Charlotte Milburn

David Cameron (Chair)

Derek Ross (Boar Member)

Kate Christie

Mariaan Pita

Mike Woolvin

Nasim Mehrabi

Pip Mackie (arrived late)

Apologies

James Lee

Richard Hardy (Prospect)

Russell Jones (Board Member)

Item 1: Welcome and introductions

1. David Cameron (DC) welcomed everyone.
2. Apologies were received from the above.



Item 2: Social Media Policy

3. Brenna Jessie introduced the policy explaining that:
 - a) It came about in context of all of our conversations around values and culture - it is something that staff have questions about and are unsure of.
 - b) Also came about in response to a gap - we have a very out of date digital communications policy that more focussed around people wanting to set up National Park channels and it doesn't reflect where we currently are or the role that social media has in most of our lives.
 - c) We are at a point where there's a lot of online discourse around the National Park, and when a lot of media get their stories from socials, and therefore the onus is on us to be really clear about the expectations we have of staff using social media and how that relates to their role in terms of civil service.
 - d) This is a vital piece of infrastructure to make sure our approach is consistent and fair, but also that it's robust enough to be able to actually deal with any inappropriate conduct online.
 - e) The policy has been worked on collaboratively with Kate, Olly and David Cameron. This is organisational and not a communications policy because fundamentally it relates to people's job roles / personal lives.
 - f) The intention is that the policy is robust but also supportive and provides clarity of understanding. Board members have welcomed that this policy applies equally to members and staff.
4. The following points were raised:
 - a) A rep said that staff representations to them indicated that the policy has been well received. There is recognition that it is a complicated area, and that we are unlikely to keep everyone happy, but the policy is clear, and it is good to have this in place.
 - b) It was asked what the policy is for and how does it relate to actions outside of work, and a suggestion that it overlaps with the Code of Conduct. Responded that the policy was developed because staff had expressed uncertainty how to use social media in their personal lives – the policy provides this clarity. We are putting together policy provisions to guide staff's use of social media so as to prevent any situations that may prompt use of the code of conduct.
 - c) DC explained that social media use involves external perception, which is something staff cannot control. Perception is the onus of the receiver of information, and they can deliberately or not confuse that perception. So, the



receiver may well choose to perceive yours comments on social media as being made as a staff member, even if the comments were made in a personal capacity.

- d) A rep asked if this policy may be perceived by staff as over policing people in their personal lives. Responded that the policy is about giving staff tools to use social media in line with the responsibilities that they signed up to when they agreed to be a member of the Park Authority staff complement. So, working for the Park Authority imposes upon us responsibilities that may impinge on our personal lives. We recognise and appreciate that our staff are energised, motivated and passionate, and this is not just at work. Through this policy, we are trying to be supportive, albeit in a policy environment. So, this is a supportive first step to ensure that staff don't blunder inadvertently into an issue.
- e) A member asked to which extent we can be critical of a partner and also if there were guideline on day-to-day issues. Responded that this about personal use of social media, not corporate use, and it is important to note the voluntary nature of staff interactions. We respect staffs right to free speech, but staff do need to exercise caution in personal responses. It was stated that if staff want to get involved with on-line discussions, they should first speak to the communications team and use the communications staff as a resource for guidance.
- f) It was agreed to trial the policy, and review in 18 months.

Brenna Jessie left the meeting.

Pip Mackie joined the meeting.

Item 3: Driving at Work Policy

- 5. Kate Christie (KC) introduced the policy and requested feedback.
- 6. The following points were raised:
 - a) Where there are concerns regarding a colleague's driving ability, should the whistleblowing policy be used? KC responded that the whistleblowing policy may be too robust, and it may escalate the situation beyond what is necessary. KC advised that the guidance included in the revised Driving at Work policy was developed following an incident last year. The policy references staff not having to have a conversation with the individual if they



do not feel comfortable to do so and to raise the issue with their line manager instead. DC advised that if the HR team received a whistleblowing, grievance or complaint and it was clear that no preliminary steps had been taken, it would be advised that it would be too early to invoke these processes, and a more informal approach should be started with. This could be either directly, through the line manager or the HR team before invoking a more formal process. The guidance in the revised policy provides that more informal step. KC to provide link in the Driving at Work policy to the Whistleblowing and / or Complaints policy advising that this is also an option if the situation requires it.

- b) It was raised that if someone is driving a car and speeding, this needs to be reported as it's breaking the law. As this would potentially put the next person that goes in the car with the individual at risk. DC responded that perceptions of driving can be different and there was no condoning of breaking of traffic rules. KC advised that sometimes the best response to a situation is that provided "in the moment".
- c) There had been representation about the policy making little reference to sustainability. KC pointed out that the travel and subsistence policy clearly sets out hierarchy of vehicle use to ensure the most sustainable behaviour.

- 7. The policy was adopted.

Item 5: Equality Mainstreaming and Outcome Report

- 8. KC introduced the report and advised this was an opportunity to share the document in advance of wider publication. Work was being done with the Communications team to share some of the stories through a variety of campaigns and to share publicly the work that is being done.
- 9. No points were raised.

Item 6: Sexual Harassment Risk Assessment

- 10. KC picked up at the last SCF that organisations now have proactive responsibility to prevent sexual harassment. Part of this was developing a sexual harassment risk assessment. The risk assessment has been through the Health and Safety Committee and Senior Management Team (SMT). Following feedback from SMT,



the document would be amended to include reference to the multiple means of reporting (as specified in the Dignity at Work policy).

11. No points were raised.

Item 7: Pay Award

12. DC advised that the paper set out the approach to the agreed three year pay award. The budget would be presented to the Board on 28 March, and it was confirmed that 2.5% progression award was affordable and had been budgeted for. The pay award had also been signed off by Scottish Government. If there were general agreement with the staff group, then the organisation was on track to implement pay award from 01 April payroll, subject to capacity in the finance team.
13. DC advised the Cost-of-Living element was set at 2.3%. He said that monitoring on inflation would continue and that the last inflation rate from January had increased to approximately 3%. Discussions with the Staff Consultative Forum (SCF) would also continue and ensuring that the pay position was still in context to wider economic position.
14. It was asked when progression awards would be implemented. DC advised that the whole pay award would be implemented in April.
15. KC to issue an update on performance development conversations and work planning for the forthcoming year. A reminder would be posted on Eolas requesting staff to set their work plans for the next 12 months. An update regarding the implementation of the pay award would be provided either at next week's staff meet or by correspondence.

Item 8: Health and Safety Update

16. KC advised that the Health and Safety Committee minutes were available on Eolas.
17. There had been a significant increase in the number of accidents / incidents being reported. It was felt that the number of these had not necessarily increased. However, with the implementation of the new system reporting was now easier. This would indicate that that there was previously significant under reporting.



Item 9: Leadership

18. DC advised that the work on culture and principles needed drawing together, including future actions.
19. The ongoing work with staff in Bands D / E regarding collaboration, line management etc. was raised. It was queried if elements of those should come back to SCF, due to these staff representing other bands in the organisation. KC advised that an action plan was currently being formulated, which impacted on all staff and therefore it would be brought to SCF.

Item 10: Equalities

20. KC advised that there was now a neurodiversity support group, as advertised on Eolas. It was highlighted that there were also support groups for carers, menopause and auto immune conditions. An equalities page would be developed on Eolas to share these groups with staff.

Item 11: AOB

21. No items were raised.
22. The meeting concluded at 03:25pm.

Ref	Action	Responsible	Due Date
06.12.21 Para 19	Electric Car Salary Sacrifice Scheme Future updates to be brought back to SCF 27.06.22: Finance team looking into and any proposal will be brought to MT 07.11.22: Still progressing 25.01.23: Ongoing 20.03.23: Update: Support had been received from NatureScot who had recently launched a similar scheme. Any proposals would go to MT then be brought back to SCF 19.06.23: still progressing	KC	June 22



	<p>19.02.24: Craig Lewis from the finance team will come to SMT to give an update.</p> <p>12.06.24: Ongoing</p> <p>16.09.24: Craig Lewis (finance team) to pull together a paper for SMT setting out proposals and options on EV. Should be at SMT in next month and should be at next SCF.</p>		
<p>19.02.24 Para 21</p>	<p>Internal Recruitment Policy</p> <p>Internal recruitment opportunities not being circulated to be raised with SEPA / NatureScot.</p> <p>12.06.24: SEPA requested that the internal recruitment of posts was paused. NatureScot are keen for this to be reinstated, as are CNPA.</p> <p>16.09.24: Discussions ongoing and will be updated in due course.</p>	KC	Jun 24
<p>12.06.24 Para 18</p>	<p>Credit Union</p> <p>To consider how to take forward</p> <p>16.09.24: Ongoing</p>	DC	Sept 24
<p>12.03.25 Para 11a</p>	<p>Driving at Work Policy:</p> <p>Include link to Whistleblowing or Complaints Policy – whichever is appropriate.</p>	KC	Mar 25
<p>12.03.25 Para 25</p>	<p>Equalities</p> <p>Eolas page to be developed</p>	KC	Sept 25