



For discussion

Title: Cairngorms 2030: Quarter two 2024 (April - June)
Programme update

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Strategic context

1. Cairngorms 2030 (C2030) will inspire people and communities in the National Park to take action 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. To update the Park Authority Performance Committee on the risks under management.
4. This paper presents the status of programme management, including risk management status, based on information in project reports for the period from March to June 2024, updated where appropriate to reflect current position as at the time of writing, and the planned work to end September 2024.

Recommendations

5. The Performance committee is asked to discuss:
 - a) Programme risk level raised from green to amber due to temporary loss of Sustrans design funding notification.
 - b) During the quarter transport funding risk (Active Communities) was increased from amber to red due to lack of design stage funding. This was after notification from Sustrans Scotland that funding for Active Communities design projects was currently unavailable. The lack of funding means over £1 million design projects cannot proceed as planned during 2024. To mitigate this risk a meeting was





convened with Transport Scotland and the Park Authority to explore alternative funding opportunities. This meeting has given confidence that funding will be secured albeit with a delay which may span quarter three, to September 2024, and possibly into quarter four, October to December 2024. The risk was therefore moved back to amber. The Theme Lead continues to direct team on essential preparatory work and therefore funding delays are not critical dependencies at this stage.

- c) Peatland restoration has identified a potential underspend in 2024 / 25 due to the loss one major project. Team is seeking new projects at a similar scale.
- d) Scottish Forestry has agreed that all woodland grant schemes in the park can be considered as match funding, which will potentially contribute a significant amount.
- e) New match funding totalling £116,566 has been secured over the period with an additional £20,000 sought through partner funding application.

Strategic risk management

Performance Dashboard: Programme level

Performance Measure	RAG status		Issue/mitigation
Programme risk profile	Amber		Risk profile increased from green to amber following notification from Sustrans Scotland that design stage funding was not available in 2024 / 2025.
Future funding profile	Amber		Risk profile was increased from green to amber following notification from Sustrans Scotland that design stage funding was not available in 2024 / 2025. Meeting organised with Transport Scotland to explore alternative funding models which has given confidence that funding will be secured albeit with a delay which may span quarter three, to September 2024, and possibly into quarter four, October to December 2024. Theme Lead continues to direct team on essential preparatory work and therefore funding delays are not critical dependencies at this stage.



Finance: impact on Park Authority budget management	Green		No issues
Procurement	Green		No issues. New Procurement Officer has been recruited by the Park Authority.
Staffing	Green		Empowerment Theme Lead now on maternity leave and secondment cover in place. Peatland Restoration Manager has resigned from his post, with replacement now in post.
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 initially increased from amber to red following notification from Sustrans Scotland that design stage funding was not available in 2024 / 25 and pending final resolution of situation noted above. A meeting was organised with Transport Scotland to explore alternative funding models. Following reassurances received at this meeting, the risk around transport funding has been reclassified to amber while continuing to show risk escalation pending receipt of more formal feedback.

Stakeholder engagement

6. Press releases

- a) Nature prescriptions now available in Badenoch and Strathspey ([link here](#))
- b) Cairn Magazine articles, three issues per year, distributed to over 12,000 households and all 18,00 residents in the National Park ([link to latest issue here](#)).
 - i. Page six – Bearing fruit
 - ii. Page nine – Dementia activity programme
 - iii. Page nine – Green prescriptions



- iv. Page 11 – Community catchups

- 7. Other press activity
 - a) Strathspey Herald - Natural tonic now being prescribed by GPs in Cairngorms National Park ([link here](#))

- 8. Social media Summary of connections:
 - a) 14 posts across the Cairngorms National Park Facebook, Instagram, X and LinkedIn.
 - i. Spend of £25 on one Facebook boost (Braemar community drop in)
 - ii. 43,655 impressions
 - iii. Reach of 26,255
 - iv. 2,908 engagements
 - v. 991 likes/reactions
 - vi. 97 shares
 - vii. 22 comments
 - viii. 611 link clicks

- 9. Volunteer activity has focussed on two main areas:
 - a) Supporting the delivery of activities taking place as part of the Dementia Activity Resource Centre's work with clients and their families / carers and
 - b) The involvement of volunteers in the Climate Learning and Education project. This is summarised below:
 - i. Number of volunteer hours in the last quarter is 106.5 hours
 - ii. Number of new volunteers recruited in quarter two April to June 2024 is seven
 - iii. Total number of new volunteers to date is 13 volunteers
 - iv. Total volunteer sessions to date are 28 sessions
 - v. Total volunteer hours to date 128 hours.

Supporting information - theme lead highlights

- 10. Transforming landscapes
 - a) Woodland expansion: Planting of approximately 1,000 hectares of new native woodland is progressing at two locations on Atholl Estate, Perthshire
 - b) Peatland restoration: On target to deliver close to 1,500 hectares this year. Staffing and annual budget management risks escalated and mitigated
 - c) Cairngorms Future Farming: risk rating was amber at the last quarter and is now green.



- d) Climate Resilient Catchment project remains at amber because of the uncertainties around the Dalghety Floodplain element. Mitigation plan to be prepared during quarter three 2024.
- e) Nature Networks project continues to make good process with Community Deer Larder project with legal and permission issues resolved. Expression of interest forms and grant awards to be completed in quarter three 2024. This work ties in well with the Park Authority's development of a red deer cull subsidy scheme as part of its core activities.
- f) During the quarter there were two projects without a lead officer, Green Finance and Peatland Restoration. The Peatland post has since been filled and the Green Finance post will be re-advertised in quarter four 2024.

11. Empowerment

- a) Climate Learning and Education: The continued engagement of four out of the five schools is a testament to the hard work of the Project Team and how the project model fits with school and Education Scotland priorities.
- b) Community Arts and Culture: Preparation work for the next quarter has gone very well with the creative community reaffirming their desire to be involved in shaping the future direction of the project.
- c) Effective community engagement: Significant progress with establishing a new team, building relationships with partners, putting together a programme of summer public engagement events, establishing the team processes, and exploring the options for innovative engagement methods.
- d) Community managed climate grants, wellbeing economy and climate conscious communities' projects have been inducting the staff, establishing processes, building relationships with partners, and building the foundations for the work in the next quarter.

12. Transport

- a) Cycle friendly Cairngorms: Meetings with relevant local communities have been worthwhile and very likely to develop into support for community led loan schemes with locations for at least two Community led loan hubs identified. This project strand has delivered skills sessions to two primary schools so far with multiple sessions within these schools developing cycling confidence for several year groups.
- b) Cycle friendly Cairngorms: The three potential areas have been identified to date for the first ebike five charging stations. Work undertaken to determine preferred style of e-cargo bike for the National Park Ranger Service to demonstrate. Pricing



or fares to use e-bike charging facilities and use of loan services of e-bikes all need further consideration as do the plans for the costs of running the schemes, the maintenance and security of the bikes. Team working with Cairngorms Trust to consider fit with and lessons learned from the Trust's Active Cairngorms E-bike (ACE) project.

- c) Active communities work faces some uncertainty with Sustrans confirming design funding is not currently available. The team is now preparing project plans and invitations to tender in preparation for procurement in quarter three and in anticipation of funding being unlocked. Delay in funding allocations is therefore currently being mitigated through ongoing staff-led development work of tender specifications.
- d) Sustainable transport: developing the sustainable workstream has defined the scope of several work packages with strands focussed on improving public transport and a feasibility study for demand responsive transport in one area of the Cairngorms. Partnership working and influencing others is a key aspect of this strand and strong relationships are being built with the Regional Transport Partnership Hitrans as well as Community Transport Partnerships.
- e) Changing travel behaviours: Opportunities for collaboration and positive relationships built in quarter two will develop in quarter three to deliver results in relation to confidence building activities. Investment in local initiatives to build on community led walking and cycling confidence that will lead to behaviour change is a crucial strand to this workstream. Further training and development of our own staff and enabling communities to build their capacity and capabilities is also crucial to build on a sustainable legacy for this aspect of the programme. Working with local community led initiatives to build on their success and impact has been identified as a positive way forward.

13. Health and Wellbeing

- a) Wellbeing economy: Discussions are underway amongst the Park Authority's management team to determine how best to take this project forward to ensure that benefit is captured and reported in a meaningful way.
- b) Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre: Continuing interest in the work from partners and other organisations. This interest will be key in developing a sustainable long-term model for the centre.
- c) Public Health and the Outdoors: The increased number and variety of referrals from GP's is raising a lot of questions about how the process can best work. This is enabling an innovative approach to testing protocols and procedures for working in this sector. The increased number of referrals is also raising questions



about the level of resourcing and capacity that will be needed as the project develops.

14. Recruitment

- a) The following posts will be recruited when the Transport Scotland funding challenge has been resolved.
 - i. Graduate Transport Planner, band C.
- b) The Scottish Land Commission is also recruiting for a Green Finance and Community Wealth Officer in partnership with the Park Authority. This post will be advertised in quarter four 2024.
- c) The Rural Development and Communities Manager, Fi McNally, has left her post on maternity leave. Eilidh Todd has now taken on the post on a 16-month long secondment from South of Scotland Enterprise.
- d) The Peatland Programme Manager, Matt Watson, has resigned his post. The post has since been filled through internal recruitment.

15. Training

- a) Staff welcome and introductions day held at Glenmore Outdoor Centre.
- b) Microsoft Project training delivered.
- c) Facilitation training delivered.
- d) Risk management training delivered
- e) Monitoring and Evaluation workshops delivered.

16. Sustrans

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- b) The project risk has been further mitigated by the staff team continuing to work on procurement specifications which comprise the current critical path for this project.



17. Governance

- a) NLHF UK Board Chair, Trustee, Scotland CEO and investment leads met with Park Authority CEO, C2030 programme staff and partners on 10 May 24 to discuss nature-based solutions projects.
- b) The Cairngorms 2030 programme team will meet with the NLHF monitoring consultants on 15 August 2024.
- c) The next Programme Board meeting will be held on 06 September 2024.

18. Budget and cash flow

- a) Programme match funding position is being actively monitored with Scottish Government and other delivery partners.
- b) The Park Authority submitted and received payment of the NLHF quarter two 2024 financial claim.
- c) The cash flow implications of the Sustrans Scotland (Active Communities) funding notice will be confirmed in quarter three 2024. The mitigation from Transport Scotland suggests the risk status will be lowered from amber to green.
- d) Peatland restoration has identified a potential underspend in 2024 / 25 due to the loss one major project.
- e) Scottish Forestry has agreed that all woodland grant schemes in the park can be considered as match funding.
- f) Match funding of £71,566 has been secured from Scottish Graduate School of Social Science (SGSSS) and Edinburgh University for the Cairngorms 2030 PhD scholarship.
- g) Transport team has secured £25,000 new funding from Regional Transport Partners, Highland and Island Transport Partnership (HITRANS) (£25,000) and North East Scotland Transport Partnership (NESTRANS) (£5,000) to undertake active travel behaviour change.
- h) The Nature Networks project has secured additional £20,000 match funding from the Park Authority Conservation Team to create 8.5 hectares of species rich grassland progress on Tormore Estate.
- i) The Arts and Culture Project is submitting a £20,000 Creative Scotland funding application, which can be used as NLHF match funding.

19. Procurement

- a) A new Procurement Officer has been recruited by the Park Authority. This is a core Park Authority post, who will also help to advise Cairngorms 2030 staff. The Park Authority is renewing its Procurement Strategy which will support the community wealth building and wellbeing economy aspirations of the programme.



- b) The Park Authority is now working in partnership with the Scottish Government's procurement team to improve contract management and oversight.

20. Programme delivery actions to end September 2024.

- a) 20 July 2024 - C2030 roadshow engagement event – Tomintoul
- b) 30 July 2024 - C2030 roadshow engagement event – Carrbridge
- c) 31 July 2024 - Knowledge sharing: Dumfries and Galloway Council
- d) 03 Aug 2024 - C2030 roadshow engagement event – Newtonmore
- e) 08 Aug 2024 - C2030 roadshow engagement event – Grantown Show
- f) 09 Aug 2024 - Knowledge sharing: Northern Ireland Water
- g) 06 Aug 2024 - Knowledge sharing: South Downs National Park
- h) 06 Sept 2024 - Cairngorms 2030 Programme board meeting
- i) 01 Sept 2024 - C2030 roadshow engagement event – Grantown on Spey
- j) 02 Sept 2024 - Knowledge sharing: Cairngorms Connect Conference
- k) Sept 2024 - Cairngorms 2030 PHD studentship starts master's course
- l) Sept 2024 - Staff risk register training
- m) 30 Sept 2024 - Final monitoring and evaluation plan

21. Significant Programme Change Requests

- a) None

22. Significant Budget Adjustments

- a) Transport budgets for Active Communities project to be reviewed by Transport Scotland for quarter three 2024.

Conclusions

23. Performance Overview and Matters Meriting Strategic Review

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moved back to amber. Project manager continues to direct team on essential preparatory work and therefore funding delays are not critical dependencies at this stage.

- c) Peatland restoration has identified a potential underspend due to the loss one project. Team is actively seeking new projects at a similar scale to replace restoration site.
- d) Scottish Forestry has agreed that all woodland grant schemes in the park can be considered as match funding, which will potentially contribute a significant amount.
- e) New match funding totalling £116,566 has been secured over the period with an additional £20,000 sought through partner funding application.

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