
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: STANDING ORDERS

Prepared by: David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services

Purpose

This paper presents the Board and Planning Committee Standing Orders for review, following discussions at the previous Board meeting in December 2013.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- a) Consider the suggested adaptations to Board and Planning Committee Standing Orders;
- b) Consider in particular the future approach to Planning Committee site visits and whether attendance at such visits is a requirement for future participation in discussion and decision making on items of business for which site visits have been deemed necessary; and
- c) Approve revisions to standing orders.

Executive Summary

The Board agreed at its meeting in December 2013 that the Standing Orders for the Board and the Planning Committee should be reviewed. The review has been undertaken, with proposed revisions set out in the Annexes to this paper. While the review was initiated by discussion at Board on the process for appointment of Committee Conveners, the opportunity has been taken to undertake a fuller review of standing orders.

Brief explanatory notes to the revisions are given in footnotes in the Annexes. Key points of note are set out in more detail below.

Delegation to Staff

A specific addition to the Planning Standing Orders to be highlighted is the provision within these Standing Orders for planning responsibilities to be delegated to staff on the basis of a clear scheme of delegation approved by the Committee. There is no intent to seek to have any further delegation of responsibilities to officers. This addition covers the current arrangements of delegated call-in decisions. The inclusion of this provision also allows for any further delegation agreed by the Committee to be readily put in place, without first having to again review Standing Orders and subsequently have any revisions also endorsed by the Board. Any such delegation would have to be agreed in full by the Committee prior to being put in place.

Planning Committee Site Visits

Following feedback received, the process for seeking a site visit to support consideration of an item of business for Planning Committee has been made more explicit.

With regard to whether attending a site visit then becomes essential for future participation in decision making on that item of business, I understand this matter has previously been discussed by Committee with no consensus to change standing orders. This aspect has therefore been left unchanged in the attached document. In reviewing standing orders at this time, Management Team would welcome clarity from the Board on the consequence of using site visits as a tool in decision making. Where a site visit has been deemed necessary to the effective consideration of an item, should members not participating in that site visit remain eligible to participate in subsequent discussion and decision making processes?

Should Board members consider that a change in current practice is required to make attendance at site visits a requirement for future participation in discussion and decision making processes, suggested adaptation to standing orders is:

~~When making site visits Members are not functioning as a Committee. There is therefore no requirement for a quorum and while applicants/supporters, objectors and Community Councils may attend they have no right to speak.~~ For any business item which has required a site visit, only members who attended the site visit may participate in any way in the subsequent consideration of the item by the Committee and / or vote relative to that item.

A site visit is managed by the Committee Convener. The Convener, supported by planning officers, shall explain the purpose of the site visit and the procedure to be followed. A record of members attending the site visit will be taken by officers supporting the site visit, and only those members recorded as attending the site visit will be permitted to participate in subsequent consideration of the relevant item of business by the Committee.

CNPA officers will provide a short presentation on the proposal and point out any relevant features of the site and its surroundings. Members of the Committee may ask, via the Committee Convener, questions about matters relating to the site to officers, applicants or their agents, or objectors. Non-Members present will only be allowed to speak on the direction of the Committee Convener and they will be permitted only to point out features of the site or building, land ownership and means of access. No discussions on the merits of a proposal, or decisions, and no oral representations of any form will take place during site visits.

~~Members make themselves familiar with sites in a number of different ways and non-attendance at a site visit will not preclude Members from taking part in the decision process on an item at a formal Committee meeting~~

We would welcome a final steer from the Board on this issue.

Board Member Contacts

I recognise that one aspect under recent consideration by the Planning Committee, the open accessibility of members to be contacted on any business, has not been incorporated into these revised standing orders. I believe that once arrangements for putting members

contact details into the public domain have been completed and agreed, guidelines for the use of these contacts and the status of correspondence made through them is better supported by a separate advice note rather than forming an element of standing orders. Setting up email addresses for Board members and drafting supporting guidelines is underway and we will aim to have this process complete by the end of April.

Following discussion and approval of revisions, final amended Standing Orders will be circulated to the Board.

David Cameron

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