



Minutes of the Board Meeting

Held at Cairngorms National Park Authority office, Grantown on Spey

In Person

23 June 2023 at 9.30am

Present

Xander McDade (Convener)

Janet Hunter (Deputy Convener)

Kenny Deans

Paul Gibb

Russell Jones

John Kirk

Derek Ross

Eleanor Mackintosh

Sandy Bremner

Bill Lobban

Steve Micklewright

Hannah Grist

Chris Beattie

Lauren MacCallum

Dr Gaener Rodger

Geva Blackett

In Attendance

Grant Moir, CEO

David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services & Deputy CEO

Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning & Place

Andy Ford, Director of Nature & Climate Change

Gavin Miles, Head of Strategic Planning

Kate Christie, Head of Organisational Development

Colin Simpson, Head of Visitor Services

David Clyne, Head of Heritage Horizons Programme

Dan Harris, Planning Manager (Forward Planning & Service Improvement)

Jenny Alan, Cairngorms 2030 Programme Manager

Fiona McNally, Rural Development and Communities Manager

Mathew Hawkins, Conservation Manager

Alan Smith, Outdoor Learning & Engagement Manager

Karen Archer, Press and Communications Officer

James Ade, Clerk to the Board



Apologies

Ann Ross

Dr Fiona McLean

Doug McAdam

Welcome and introduction

1. Xander McDade, the Board Convener, welcomed everyone to the meeting along with the newly appointed members Hannah Grist, Steve Micklewright and Sandy Bremner to the meeting. Apologies were noted.

Approval of minutes of previous meetings

2. The draft public minutes of the last meeting held on the 24 March 2023 were agreed with no amendments.

Matters arising not covered elsewhere

3. The Board Convener provided an update on the action points from 24 March 2023 minutes:
 - a) Para 8i: Director of Planning & Place to speak to Eleanor Mackintosh and Geva Blackett about potential projects in the short and long term in the Donside area of the Cairngorms National Park - Complete
 - b) Para 12i: The CEO to add a review for support mechanisms for farming to the paper - Complete
 - c) Para 20i: Director of Corporate Services to write paper presenting possible voting arrangements for forthcoming elections - Complete

Declarations of interest

4. There were no declarations of interest.

CEO Report (Paper 1)

5. Grant Moir, Chief Executive, introduced Paper 1 which was to highlight to Board Members the main strategic areas of work that are being directed by the Management Team. These are areas where significant staff resources are being



directed to deliver (with partners) the aspirations of the National Park Partnership Plan.

Kenny Deans joined the meeting at 9.44am

6. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
 - a) The issue of wildfires in the National Park was discussed at length, with members highlighting their concerns about the immediate and long term threat they pose to the residents of the park; response times to wildfires; and the need for fire management plans. Grant Moir, CEO, highlighted the work by the Park Authority including clear wildfire messaging and working with partner organisations in developing an integrated wildfire management plan for the Park. He also highlighted issues around enforcement and the need to think about this issue when considering the potential to introduce a fire management byelaw. The Convener responded to issues around fire and rescue response times suggesting he write to the Scottish Government on the Board's behalf to highlight the issue. The CEO agreed to put out a public statement after the board meeting setting out the work being done by the Park to combat wildfires.
 - b) A member asked whether there are comparisons between species in the Cairngorms Connect project and the East Cairngorms Moorland partnership and if there was an update on the Braemar Path. Andy Ford, Director of Nature & Climate Change, responded that there was a comparative study taking place and the results of this can be shared. Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning & Place, replied that the original specifications of the project in Braemar were not appropriate and a new proposal is currently going through the Outdoor Access Trust, though this will require new planning permission.
 - c) Members queried whether the peatland jobs created were new or existing jobs and whether staffing levels were sufficient to deliver projects. The CEO responded that data were currently being gathered and that peatland restoration funding was securing existing jobs as well as creating new ones. The Park Authority has the staffing capacity to deliver the current programme and are also trialling using agents to do some of the work with Park staff acting as quality control.
 - d) A member raised that it is essential that housing is used for key workers in the community. The Convener responded that housing policy can prioritise key workers within some local authorities in the Park and that Board Members nominated by local authorities could engage with those local authorities that don't prioritise key workers to change their policy.



7. The Board noted the Paper. The Convener thanked the Chief Executive and all staff on behalf of the Board.
8. Action Points Arising:
 - i. The CEO agreed to put out a public statement after the board meeting setting out the work being done by the Park to combat wildfires.
 - ii. The Convener will write to Scottish Fire and Rescue on the Board's behalf to highlight the issue that service changes will have on on wildfire management.
 - iii. The Director of Nature & Climate Change will share the comparative study taking place between species in the Cairngorms Connect project and the East Cairngorms Moorland partnership.

Cairngorms 2030: National Lottery Heritage Horizons Fund Delivery Phase Application (Paper 2)

9. Grant Moir introduced Paper 2, which seeks approval to submit the Cairngorms 2030 delivery phase application to the National Lottery Heritage Horizons Fund (NLHF) as the main applicant and 'Accountable Body' for the Cairngorms 2030 Programme, with presentations from David Clyne, Head of Heritage Horizons Programme, covering Programme plans and the key content of the proposed bid and David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services & Deputy CEO, covering governance and risk management approaches.
10. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
 - a) Issues around public transport were discussed with members asking how this fund would help resolve them. Colin Simpson, Head of Visitor Services, informed the board that this fund would allow the Park Authority to try some new solutions that, if successful, could be rolled out elsewhere. The CEO added that while it was the first step in solving some of the Park's transport issues, the fund was in no way large enough to solve them all and further funding would be needed. Discussion also covered that it was not the role of the Park Authority nor the Programme to take over the statutory transport responsibilities sitting with other organisations. Additionally, the CEO stated he would contact Moray Council about bus transport routes.
 - b) Members questioned Park Authority staff on how community engagement would be implemented during the Cairngorms 2030 Programme. The CEO reassured the Board that community engagement was embedded into all the projects that



make up the programme. The Head of Heritage Horizons Programme added that community design is a key part of the funding criteria and is a set parameter for the programme. Additionally, there has already been extensive series of consultations, and engagement is built into the programme with three full time equivalent Community Engagement Officers.

- c) Members asked if the Park had a legacy plan for the project and whether inflation had been accounted for in the budget. The CEO answered that this work is embedded in the Park Plan and will be picked up in the following Park Plan. Learning has also been taken from other NLHF projects that have gone before. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services & Deputy CEO, added that there is current provision with an inflation and also a wider contingency provision included in the Programme budget. While the process of estimating these provisions has already begun, it will be finalised prior to bid submission once all project plans are finalised.

11. The Board approved the Paper. The Convener thanked the Head of Heritage Horizons Programme and the Heritage Horizons staff on behalf of the Board.

12. Action Points Arising:

- i. The CEO to contact Moray Council about bus routes into the park.

Amendments to Standing Orders (Paper 3)

13. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services and Deputy CEO, introduced Paper 3, laying out the proposed changes to Standing Orders, following notification of the changes to the board at its meeting in March 2023.

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

- a) Members raised their discomfort around changing the numbers required for committee meetings to be quorate, even temporarily in exceptional circumstances. The Convener highlighted to the Board issues around a number of committee meetings being unable to go ahead due to vacancies and members being unavailable, leaving committees - particularly the Audit & Risk Committee - not quorate. It was requested that the Director of Corporate Services and Deputy CEO bring back a further paper laying out member substitutions at committee meetings to help with issues around quorum.



15. The Board deferred decision on the paper pending further consideration of using substitutes. The Convener thanked the Director of Corporate Services on behalf of the Board for continuing to take forward the Board's wishes on its desired Standing Orders.

16. Action Points Arising:

- i. Director of Corporate Services and Deputy CEO to bring back a further paper laying out member substitutions at committee meetings to help with issues around quorum.

Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan – Development Plan Scheme 2023 (Paper 4)

17. Dan Harris, Planning Manager, introduced Paper 4 outlining the Development Plan Scheme (2023) for the next Local Development Plan.

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

- a) A member questioned whether the evidence gathered from the National Partnership Plan consultations would be carried into the Local Development Plan and how the Park would be supporting communities with Local Place Plans. The Planning Manager responded that the evidence has come from the previous Local Development Plan though the evidence base is still ongoing. Additionally, ideally communities would create their Local Place Plan in advance of the Local Development Plan so that they can be taken into account in the development plan. However, if a community does not want to create a Local Place Plan then their community action plan will be taken into account.
- b) Members questioned how community input would be delivered and how the community would be consulted whilst keeping in mind consultation fatigue. The Planning Manager informed the Board that there will be advertising in the Cairn magazine to spread awareness and the development scheme contains a link to information and resources about what is required from groups. Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning & Place added that one of the key learnings from Cairngorms 2030 was the Authority consulted too widely, with consultations now being monitored by the Communications Team in the Authority. Additionally, the Authority is looking to revive and reengineer the Association of Cairngorms Communities so that staff can meet with the public in one place face to face.



19. The Board approved the Paper. The Convener thanked the Planning Team on behalf of the Board.

20. Action Points Arising:

None

Framework Agreement with Scottish Government (Paper 5)

21. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services and Deputy CEO introduced Paper 5 which notifies the board of the proposed replacement of the Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM), which has set out the governance arrangements between Scottish Government and the Park Authority since designation of the organisation, with an updated 'Framework Agreement'.

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

- a) A member questioned whether the CEO was happy for the board to challenge him on staffing numbers and performance, as was suggested in the document. Grant Moir, CEO, responded that he has no problem with this and this now happens through the Resources Committee and the operational plan discussion at board.

23. The Board noted the Paper. The Convener thanked the Director of Corporate Services on behalf of the Board.

24. Action Points Arising:

None

Public Sector Equality Duty: Update on Equality Outcomes 2021 - 2025 (Paper 6)

25. Kate Christie, Head of Organisational Development, introduced Paper 6 to draw the Board's attention to the Park Authority's Update on Equality Outcomes 2021 - 2025 Report, and to highlight the key equality achievements over the last two years.

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



- a) A member asked who was on the equalities panel. Head of Organisational Development informed the Board that the equalities panel was made up of 11 members who represent a broad variety of people: those who have expertise in equality matters to enthusiasts in this subject area. There is a yearly recruitment drive to get more people on the panel. A list of the members can be found on our website and is linked in the paper.

27. The Board noted the Paper. The Convener thanked the Head of Organisational Development and all the staff on behalf of the Board.

28. Action Points Arising:

None

Minutes from Committee Meetings (Paper 7)

29. The Convener introduced the paper that presents the draft and approved minutes of the Formal Board, Audit and Risk Committee, Resources Committee, Performance Committee and Governance Committee.

30. The Board noted the Paper.

31. Action Points Arising:

None

AOCB

32. The Convener informed the Board that this was the last Formal Board of Janet Hunter, thanking her for being Deputy Convener and leading Cairngorms tourism partnership, acknowledging her hard work during her 8 years on the Board.

33. Grant Moir, CEO, informed the Board that this was Xander McDade's last meeting as the Convener as he is stepping down. Grant Moir thanked the Convener for all his work with the Board.

Date of Next Meeting

34. The date of the next meeting is Friday 8 September in person. The public part of this meeting concluded 12.42.