



## Draft Minutes of the Staff Consultative Forum

Held at Hybrid on 16 September 2024 at 1.15pm

### Present:

Adam Streeter-Smith  
Charlotte Milburn  
David Cameron  
Derek Ross (Board Member)  
James Lee  
Kate Christie  
Mariaan Pita  
Nasim Mehrabi  
Pip Mackie  
Richard Hardy (Prospect)  
Russell Jones (Board Member)

### Apologies:

Mike Woolvin

### Item 1

#### Welcome and Apologies

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

### Item 2:

#### Review of Minutes of 12 June 2024 Meeting and Matters Arising

3. Minutes were agreed and action points were reviewed.



### **Item 3:**

#### **Paper 1: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

#### **Paper 2: Dignity at Work Policy**

4. Kate Christie (KC) introduced the papers and highlighted that these policies sit alongside each other, both of which having been extensively reviewed by the Park Authority's lawyers. The policies should now suit the tone and align with the revised organisational values and principles. DC advised that this concluded the organisational commitment to review these policies.
5. The following points were raised:
  - a) Clarification regarding the informal procedure requiring a written record of decision making which didn't make it feel informal. Clarity was also required around who makes this record. KC advised that the written review was to protect both the individual the complaint had been made about as well as the complainant. It would be a written note and state that no further action been taken. It would form part of the personnel HR record.
  - b) Staff would be encouraged to have a conversation prior to this informal stage to try to resolve any issues one to one. Where resolution was not possible it could then progress to the informal stage.
  - c) Concern that if staff choose to go for a walk socially at lunchtime (as friends) and not invite a specific colleague then the dignity at work policy could be used to say they had been excluded. KC responded that if someone wished to use the policy for this purpose, it would test this, and the outcome would demonstrate that it was a friendship situation and not exclusion. Paragraph two had tried to make this clear and provide examples without being too prescriptive. In the first instance, an individual would be encouraged to raise the issue with the party involved. If a satisfactory outcome was not achieved, then the person could go to their line manager or HR.
  - d) The possibility of someone incurring a cumulative effect (eg consistently not inviting someone to lunch) and therefore tipping into the more formal complaint procedure.
  - e) Clarity was sought around paragraph 19h, regarding team social events, including events out with the working day and / or the Park Authority premises. It was recognised that there was a distinction between social and work sponsored activities and it was not the intention of the policy to force friendships where they weren't. The policy was to guide around inclusion and what happens in teams



and organisationally eg a team meeting being held outdoors and someone is not invited.

- f) Staff representatives were asked if anything could be changed to make the policies better before launching. Staff reps responded that it was accepted that there was risk around the work / social aspect and that it would require monitoring. KC responded that many situations are nuanced, and it would be advisable to test the policy prior to making changes.
- g) It was advised that any response needs to be proportional to the incident. In terms of behaviour towards protected characteristics there is a clear pathway from informal to the formal. However, there will be aspects that sit slightly outside of that and therefore more reference needs to be made to the informal stage being a clear and important part of the resolution process. This may also help to minimise the risk of exposure for the organisation further down the line. KC advised that paragraph 37 could be amended to include that the informal stage was a first step and preferred option before escalation.

6. DC thanked everyone and the policy was adopted.

## **Item 5:**

### **Paper 3: Fertility Treatment Policy**

- 7. Kate Christie (KC) introduced the paper and highlighted that it was an addition to the suite of wellbeing policies and support already in place. The policy permits staff to attend the required hospital appointment day plus five recovery days per year, where recovery from the hospital appointment is required. It was advised that this was a 'middle ground' when compared to other public sector organisations. Other organisations varied from offering no additional time off, to offering five days per treatment cycle, including attending the hospital appointment.
- 8. KC asked the Staff Consultative Forum (SCF) for feedback. The following points were raised:
  - a) Clarification that the miscarriage policy was in place. KC advised that a policy for supporting staff through pregnancy loss was available for staff. It was also advised that the HR team will be scrutinising all policies and categorisation to make easier for staff to cross reference them.
  - b) The policy being very welcome and highlighted the organisation going above and beyond to support staff. Thanks were expressed to the HR team for bringing this forward.



9. KC thanked everyone and the policy was adopted.

### **Item 6:**

#### **Paper 4: Menstrual Health and Endometriosis Support Policy**

10. Kate Christie (KC) introduced the paper and highlighted that the development of this policy also feeds into Operational Development (OD) strategy on wellbeing. The policy seeks to provide education to staff and highlight the additional things the organisation does to support staff. The policy had also been consulted upon through the Internal Equalities Advocacy group.

11. KC asked the SCF for feedback. No points were raised.

12. KC thanked everyone and the policy was adopted.

### **Item 7:**

#### **Verbal Update: Pay Award 2024/25**

13. DC advised that following the budget announcement for 2024/25, a business case had been submitted to Scottish Government (SG) in May and it had been referred to their remuneration group. DC and KC had attended a meeting in July, whereby they advised that the pay award was seeking to align broadly to year two of the previously implemented SG pay award. This proposal was rejected by the remuneration group as it no longer met the Scottish Government (SG) pay parameters, although these had not been published prior to submission. A revised business case has since been submitted to SG, which continues to broadly seek to align to year two but this time is for a multi three-year settlement. The revised submission is now based upon the published pay parameters. The proposed pay award has been front loaded and so far, no formal feedback has been received. A meeting has been scheduled with SG for 04 October to try and get a more formal offer to staff. Recognising the extended timetable for the pay award implementation and the current fixed term contract staff (seasonal / trainee rangers), separate proposals have been developed to move those staff to a fixed salary point. This increase in pay would be broadly commensurate with what may have been expected through the pay award. It was advised that there were currently high profile pay discussions with other sectors eg Local Authority workers and the current Park



Authority pay proposal is within the same spectrum for other public sector offers. However, until further approval is received from SG no certainty can be given.

14.KC advised that the earliest timescale envisaged for an offer being made to staff and the pay award being implemented was November, but this may slip into December.

15.Feedback was provided as follows:

- a) Frustration was expressed at the continued annual delays in a pay award being agreed. It was queried if the pay progression could be implemented as at 01 April, with the cost of living element applied once agreed by SG. DC responded that the progression and cost of living are variable rates, and they have to be held together to deliver within the organisational budget. If a refusal is received regarding cost of living from SG, then the organisation may want to look at the progression amount, therefore they're linked. However, the argument for implementing these separately was heard along with the frustration at the length of time for approval.
- b) The importance of securing a pay award commensurate with other public sector employers was raised. Concern had been expressed by staff that posts in bands F and G had received a pay increase of 11.5%. It was advised that in late 2022, a benchmarking exercise had been carried out across other public sector and SG organisations. This had highlighted that whilst most salary bands were commensurate, these bands had fallen well behind those competitors. This was an entirely separate business case to SG for this alignment and it took nothing from the pay award settlement process. DC advised that he was fairly comfortable that if the business case receives approval, the 2024/25 pay award will sit within the range of other public sector organisations.
- c) It was advised that a SCF meeting to discuss the proposed pay award will be needed nearer time.

## **Item 8:**

### **Discussion: Health and Safety Update**

16.KC advised that mandatory training had been launched for all staff on the lone working and buddy system, which was more robust and user friendly.

17.Display Screen Equipment (DSE) – home working assessments needed to be completed by all staff. This was to ensure that staffs home working environment was DSE compliant, and SharePoint Lists had been helpful in supporting this.



18. A revised accident and incident system had now been introduced. This had resulted in more now being reported and was indicative that the system was user friendly.
19. It was confirmed that the minutes from the H&SC go to both SMT and the Resources committee for overview.
20. No other points were raised from staff.

### **Item 9:**

#### **Discussion: Leadership**

21. DC advised that there was a Board meeting due to be held on Friday, at which the fire bylaws and management and consultation would be discussed. There would also be a full review of the delivery against National Park Partnership Plan.
22. Xander Mcdade was due to stand down as a Board Member on 30 September as the Perth and Kinross Council representative. The new Board Member would start on 01 October.
23. The culture and values piece of staff led work was due to conclude and would be brought to the next meeting with the new principles and the evolution of the organisational culture.

### **Item 10:**

#### **Discussion: Equalities**

24. KC advised that the internal equalities advocacy group were currently revising their terms of reference. The group had been in place for two years, with 15 members of staff keen to be part of it and involved in influencing and supporting equalities in the Park Authority. Once revised, the terms of reference would go to SMT for approval.
25. It was advised that the equality outcomes were now being identified and developed in preparation for April 2025.



## Item 11:

### AOB

#### 26. Additional Day Flexi to Support Travel Carbon Footprint

- a) It was raised that under the current system the onus was on staff to accrue what could be a significant amount of flexi in a short period prior to their holiday. It was proposed that with line manager agreement, staff should be able to go into negative flexi to make use of this additional flexi time. This time could then be worked back after the holiday had taken place.
- b) KC responded that the organisation wanted to be supportive of net zero. Full time staff can currently accrue up to 14 hours flexi and with the current position if staff are going to use sustainable travel methods, they can accumulate more than the policy position to offset against travel time. The guidance was about accruing additional flexi time to the policy position. DC advised that this can be looked at, including how well the scheme is used and review it after a year.
- c) It was queried if the position disproportionately affects those staff who have caring responsibilities and therefore find it harder to accrue additional flexi time.

27. Richard Hardy (RH) advised that this may be his final meeting as the Park Authority Prospect representative. Responsibility for the Park Authority was to be transferred to his colleague, Angela Gellan. DC thanked RH for his input, contributions and time over the years and that it had been a pleasure working with him.

28. The meeting concluded at 2:40pm.

#### Staff Consultative Forum Action Table:

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	KC	June 22



	<p>launched a similar scheme. Any proposals would go to MT then be brought back to SCF</p> <p>19.06.23: still progressing</p> <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>14.09.23 Para 5b</p> <p>Para 5c</p> <p>Para 5e</p>	<p>Gender Diversity Policy</p> <p>Policy to be reviewed in 12-18 months' time</p> <p>Guidance briefing issued to staff inc. there being no hierarchy amongst the protected characteristics,</p> <p>The Dignity at Work policy to be reviewed and brought back to SCF for discussion</p> <p>Addition to Handbook re organisational culture and event organisation.</p> <p>19.02.24: The guidance briefing was issued to staff. Currently updating Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work Policies were in the process of being reviewed.</p> <p>12.06.24: Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work Policies still being reviewed.</p> <p>16.09.24: Completed.</p>	<p>KC</p>	<p>Mar 25 Dec 23</p> <p>Mar 24</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>KC</p>	<p>Jun 24</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 the Park Authority.</p> <p>16.09.24: Discussions ongoing, and will be updated in due course.</p>		
<p>12.06.24</p> <p>Para 9b</p>	<p>Informal Messaging Policy:</p> <p>Exit procedures for staff with phone numbers</p> <p>DC speak to Sandy Bremner re: Board interaction with this policy.</p> <p>16.09.24: Completed</p>	<p>KC</p> <p>DC</p>	<p>Sept 24</p>
<p>12.06.24</p> <p>Para 18</p>	<p>Credit Union</p> <p>To consider how to take forward</p> <p>16.09.24: Ongoing</p>	<p>DC</p>	<p>Sept 24</p>
<p>12.06.24</p> <p>Para 34</p>	<p>AOB: Temperature in Extension</p> <p>To consider how to take forward</p> <p>16.09.24: Facilities team have been investigating and taking forward staff communications. Completed.</p>	<p>DC / KC</p>	<p>Sept 24</p>



## **Draft Minutes of the Staff Consultative Forums**

**Held at Hybrid on 28 October 2024 at 02.00pm**

### **Present:**

David Cameron  
James Lee  
Kate Christie  
Mariaan Pita  
Mike Woolvin  
Nasim Mehrabi  
Pip Mackie  
Richard Hardy (Prospect)  
Russell Jones (Board Member)

### **Apologies:**

Adam Streeter-Smith  
Charlotte Milburn  
Derek Ross (Board Member)

### **Item 1**

#### **Welcome and Apologies**

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

### **Item 2:**

#### **Staff Pay Award Proposals**

3. David Cameron (DC) introduced pay proposals; this was for a three-year deal which would take the Park Authority through to 2026/27. The Resources Committee had



been consulted on the proposal and the staff consultation period had been open for a three-week period.

4. The following points were raised:

a) The offer assumes that inflation figures remain under 2% and the progression award set at 2.5%. The consultation document does not offer this as a guarantee, staff require more certainty given the uncertain economic outlook. DC responded that the Park Authority are committed to a salary band journey time of four-years through bands A – B and six years for bands C and above. Where staff are not on track to reach this journey time, a one-off 'balloon' payment will be made to achieve this after four or six years in post as appropriate. DC stated that it was in the Park Authority's interest to put as much resource as possible into progression to support this journey time. It was not possible to give an absolute commitment to what would happen should inflation increase, as this would depend on the resource available at that time. However, in previous similar circumstances, the Park Authority have voluntarily moved to reopen the pay award and put a supplementary pay award in place. DC confirmed that the pay position would be an ongoing open matter for discussion at SCF, and if significant changes regarding inflation occurred then discussion would take place with both the Resources Committee and the SCF. Richard Hardy (RH) advised that a possibility for addressing this may be whereby if inflation rises above certain trigger point (to be confirmed) the Park Authority would raise concern with Scottish Government and seek approval to relook at the pay award. This could include a commitment to work jointly with the Trade Union to investigate this. RH also confirmed that if the three-year pay offer were agreed, this wouldn't stop ongoing conversations taking place to ensure that the pay position is still reasonable against inflation at that point in time. DC advised that from a managerial point of view, if inflation starts with number that's not a two, then would start to trigger thinking around adequacy of the pay award: therefore, if inflation moved to 3% and above on a consistent basis against the UK Treasury target of 2% then there would be cause to consider whether action was appropriate. RH confirmed that the record of this conversation in the meeting minute would be acceptable from Prospect's perspective as a reference point for future dialogue if required.

b) DC advised that all papers to the Resources Committee dealing with matters of pay or other potential staff contractual negotiations are usually taken in a confidential session, and therefore not in public domain. However, following the conclusion of the meeting the outcome of the discussion would then become public and published through appropriate consultation papers and other material.



- c) A staff rep advised that feedback had been received that the SCF meetings weren't publicised enough and there was a need to have more frequent reminders. DC advised that details of meetings were posted on Eolas and that staff reps were also welcome to use that forum or email to remind staff that meetings were taking place. DC was open to any other means of helping raise awareness of the SCF meetings.
  - d) Feedback received from staff is that people generally just want to see this pay award process concluded.
5. It was noted that questions raised in advance of the meeting and coordinated by staff reps had been separately responded to in writing and linked on Eolas. Staff reps accepted this was acceptable treatment of these matters.
6. Richard Hardy added that the CEO position at all non-departmental public body's (NDPB's) was out with the collective bargaining process and was different to that of the staff process. It was not unusual for that to be the case and this was the same in the core civil service. As a Trade Union representative this was not something that would raise concern.
7. Kate Christie advised the next step would be to draft and circulate a formal offer to staff. The formal offer would be open for a week with the deadline for responses being Wednesday 06 November. It was recognised that a week wasn't a long time for responses, but this was on the back of a previous three-week consultation period. The offer would be emailed out to staff later today – it would contain the pay award, progression information and the next three-years' salary scales. This timescale will allow for implementation in the November payroll. Meanwhile, the HR team would meet with the finance team to discuss deadlines for implementation.

### **Item 3:**

#### **AOB**

8. Sexual Harassment Policy
  - a) KC flagged that there had been recent changes to the Equalities Act 2010 which were effective from Saturday 26 October 2024. The changes were around the employer's duties to proactively prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. The Dignity at Work policy was in the process of being revised to include the new



duties around sexual harassment. There was also an ELMS course on this topic which staff would have to undertake. Further information would be shared with staff in due course.

9. The meeting concluded at 2:30pm.

Staff Consultative Forum action table:

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 19.02.24: Craig Lewis from the finance team will come to SMT to give an update. 12.06.24: Ongoing 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.	KC	June 22
19.02.24 Para 21	Internal Recruitment Policy Internal recruitment opportunities not being circulated to be raised with Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) / NatureScot.	KC	Jun 24



	<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>		
<p>12.06.24</p> <p>Para 18</p>	<p>Credit Union</p> <p>To consider how to take forward</p> <p>16.09.24: Ongoing</p>	<p>DC</p>	<p>Sept 24</p>