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# CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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## APPROVED MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING held in the Ballroom, Blair Castle, Blair Atholl on Friday 27 March 2015 at 10.30am

### PRESENT

Duncan Bryden (Convenor)	John Latham
Peter Argyle	Bill Lobban
Rebecca Badger	Eleanor Mackintosh
Angela Douglas	Willie McKenna
Paul Easto	Fiona Murdoch
Dave Fallows	Gordon Riddler
Katrina Farquhar	Gregor Rimell
Jeanette Gaul	Judith Webb
Kate Howie	Brian Wood (Deputy Convenor)
Gregor Hutcheon	

### In Attendance:

Grant Moir, Chief Executive,  
David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services,  
Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning & Rural Development,  
Hamish Trench, Director of Conservation & Visitor Services,  
Pete Crane, Head of Visitor Services  
Elsbeth Grant, Education & Inclusion Officer  
Alan Smith, Outdoor Learning Officer  
Adam Streeter-Smith, Outdoor Access Officer  
Gavin Miles, Policy & Improvement Manager  
Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board.

**Apologies:** None.

### Welcome and Introduction

- I. Duncan Bryden, the Convenor, welcomed everyone to the meeting in Blair Atholl.

2. The Convenor said that a positive discussion with Fiona Cruickshanks, Education Scotland, Toby Clark, John Muir Award Manager, Pammy Johal, Backbone and Hinna Habib, Community Leadership Programme on learning and inclusion covering engagement from formal education to marginal and ethnic communities had taken place the previous evening.
3. The Convenor advised Members that Items 12 and 13 on the Agenda should be for discussion and not information as the Agenda stated.
4. The Convenor congratulated all the directly elected Board Members on their recent election efforts and welcomed Rebecca Badger on to the Board. The Convenor also welcomed Judith Webb to her first Board meeting.
5. There were no apologies.

### **Minutes of Last Meeting held on 12 December, 2015 – for approval**

6. The draft Minutes of the last meeting held on 12 December 2014 were agreed subject to the following amendments:
  - At Para 46: Cabrach Community Council to be changed to Cabrach Community Association.
  - An additional Action to be added at Paragraph 52: to the effect that the draft Board minutes would be circulated to all Board Members within a month after each meeting as waiting 3 months to review the draft minutes was too long.
7. The draft Minutes of the last confidential meeting held on 12 December 2014 were agreed with no amendments.

### **Matters Arising**

8. The Convenor provided an update on the Action points from the previous meeting:
  - Action Point at Para 8 (i) – CLAG membership is now almost finalised. Thanks to those that sent suggestions to Brian Wood and David Cameron. David Cameron will send a full list of LAG members to the Board when confirmed and available.
  - Action Point at Para 17 (i) – The consultation on Land Reform was discussed by Board in January and a response submitted to SG.
  - Action Point at Para 23 (i) – Suggestions on Capercaillie Framework have been taken into account in developing Phase 2.
  - Action Point at Para 33 (i) – The forthcoming date of the Association of Cairngorms

Communities meeting was intimated and updates will be circulated as necessary. Members are free to attend and contribute.

- Action Point at Para 35 (i) – Access Authorities and Forums have been consulted.
- Action point at Para 39 (i) – Complete, David Cameron still to circulate around Members.
- Action Point at Para 42 (i) – In current papers.
- Action point 52 (i) – Outstanding; Fiona Murdoch to supply.
- Action Point 52 (ii) – Complete.

## **Declarations of Interest**

9. Rebecca Badger declared an interest in:

- Item No. 9 - Direct Interest – Issues relating to Carrbridge allocations in the LDP

## **CEO Report (Paper I)**

10. Grant Moir, Chief Executive, introduced Paper I which highlights the main strategic work streams that are being directed by Management Team and explained that these are areas where significant staff resources are being directed to deliver National Park Partnership Plan priorities. He highlighted the following issues:

- Pre-election period is about to come into effect from 30 March to 7 May.
- The Cairngorms Nature Seminar takes place on 23 April 2015.

11. The Board discussed the following:

- The Organisational Health & Safety Review carried out during the past nine months.
- The current response levels to the Active Cairngorms consultation document.
- The envisaged timeframe for completing the Speyside Way to Newtonmore.
- The dates of the Cairngorms Nature Festival. The Board wish to be consulted on these dates in the future to advise and to ensure best coverage and to avoid clashes.

12. **The Board noted the Paper.**

13. **Actions:**

- Audit Committee Paper on Health & Safety Activity to be circulated around Board Members.**
- Board to be consulted on future proposed dates for Cairngorms Nature Festival.**

## Corporate Plan 2015 - 2018 (Paper 2)

14. Grant Moir, Chief Executive, introduced Paper 2 which sets out the corporate priorities for the Cairngorms National Park Authority from 2015 – 2018. He highlighted the following points:

- This paper builds on board, staff and stakeholder discussions during 2014 and the board Discussion Paper of December 2014.
- Subject to Board approval, the Corporate Plan will be submitted to Scottish Ministers for final approval in April 2015.
- The Audit Committee will be tasked with amending and creating a new strategic risk register aligned to the new Corporate Plan.
- In the document there are a number of references to the Rural Affairs, Food and Environment (RAFE) Delivery Board which replaces ENFOR and its first meeting will take place towards the end of April 2015.

15. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following: (Amendments noted as A1 etc)

- Query as to why local authorities were not listed under key partnerships. Grant advised that local authorities are members of many of the key partnerships such as the Economic Development Forum. A1 Grant agreed to ensure that the key partner sections under each priority contained the local authorities where relevant.
- Concern that there is no suitable indicator to measure number 2 of the Scottish Government Outcomes on page 11. Grant advised the key indicators are for the activity of the Authority. The CBP business barometer provides indicators for this outcome as it measures more than tourism businesses.
- A2 With reference to Priority 3 on page 6 it was agreed to add Community Association.
- A concern regarding Key Indicator 1, on page 6, surrounding the fact that the Indicator is based on time rather than putting the right development in the right place. A suggestion was made that the Action Plan could be an alternative indicator or an additional indicator. The MT will consider this in finalising the plan.
- With reference to page 10 a suggestion was made to state that the Authority is positively looking for funding streams. A3 Grant agreed and advised that he would find an appropriate place to fit that in, he suggested that it could be added under the 'Our Commitment' heading on page 3.
- A suggestion was made to add that "the Authority is actively looking at new ways of working moving towards a strategic shift in working practices". A4 Grant agreed to find an appropriate place in the paper to fit it in.
- A suggestion was made to clarify that the figures in the table on page 10 were stated in thousands. A5 Grant agreed that this would be amended.

- Concern surrounding identifying affordable housing as key priority and not having it individually listed in the Corporate Plan. Grant advised that this issue comes under Priority 1 of Rural Development on page 6. He went on to advise that the Cairngorms National Park Authority is not the housing authority and that the right place to consider affordable housing provision was in the development of the new National Park Partnership Plan and the new Local Development Plan. Concern was raised with regard to how the message to developers surrounding affordable housing could be communicated to encourage planning applications of that type. Grant advised that the Local Development Plan is our statement of intent on affordable housing matters and that the Action Programme for the new LDP will set out further detail about how it will be delivered over the next 5 years.
- A suggestion was made to add the detail surrounding Corporate Services and Communications on the rocket diagram. A6 Grant agreed to do this.
- Query with regards to how effectiveness of leadership and influencing would be measured, under performance monitoring on page 3. Grant advised that the success is measured through the delivery of National Park Partnership Plan. He went on to suggest that at end of 5 years we could ask, “Have the things that were set out in the plan been achieved?” Grant added that the National Park Strategy Group is more effective than it has been in the past and that there is greater reference to national parks in national policy now, such as, Scottish Planning Policy etc.
- Agreement that finance cannot be spread across all the communities in the National Park at the same time and that they would concentrate on one area at a time. Currently the chosen area was Tomintoul & Glenlivet.

**16. The Board agreed to approve the CNPA Corporate Plan for 2015 – 2018 and delegated to the Management Team the task of inserting the final amendments before submission to the Scottish Government with the proviso that if there were any significant changes these will be brought back before the Board.**

**17. Actions:**

- i. Amendments (A1-6) to be made to the draft Corporate Plan as detailed above.**

**Operational Plan (Paper 3)**

18. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services, introduced Paper 3 which sets out the Authority’s financial position for the 2015/16 financial year. The paper presents the proposed financial allocations for 2015/16 of core income and expenditure and of

operational plan investment and seeks Board's approval to the Budget and Operational Plan for 2015/16.

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

- Whether the information presented in the paper presented a sufficient amount of detail for the Board to fulfil its role in considering the proposed financial allocations for the coming year.
- With whom does the accountability of budgeting lie? David Cameron agreed to circulate a copy of the Financial Memorandum to Members that sets this out.
- With reference to the Ranger Service review there was a query as to why that is not reflected in the budgets. Grant advised that any financial implications that came from the review this year would result in changes in the 2016/17 budget not this year.
- The likelihood of further shovel ready monies. David advised that there had been no word of any yet however Scottish Government had been made aware that the Authority has projects ready to go. David advised that the Scottish Government indicated that the earliest likely notification of whether money may be available for capital projects in 2015/16 is in the autumn of 2015.
- The need for the Board to be provided with an indication of the areas of work that have been cut back on as a result of tightening budgets.
- A request for information to be supplied in board papers showing the impact of any spending decision by the board on onward commitments and the % of the total budget that is being committed. David Cameron agreed to address this in future papers.
- Query regarding whether capital costs associated with the office extension should be included in the budget. David Cameron advised that capital costs were being pursued from Scottish Government while the main capital investment of works for the office extension would be made by the developer.

20. **The Board:**

- a) Considered the budget proposals for 2015/16 presented in this paper;**
- b) Approved the financial allocations for 2015/16 and requested that future clarity on forward commitments (percentage of total budget) and the implications of these and the potential leverage that may occur from specific projects are made clear to the Board at an early stage.**

## 21. Actions:

- i. **David Cameron to circulate a copy of the Financial Memorandum to Members that sets out the respective accountability of Board and Chief Executive.**
- ii. **David Cameron to include a broad indication of the budget committed in future board papers where there is a significant financial commitment extending into future financial years.**

22. The meeting paused for short comfort break.

## **Adoption of Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan (Paper 4)**

23. Gavin Miles, Policy & Improvement Manager, introduced Paper 4 which asks the Board to adopt the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan. Gavin summarised key points in the plan process as:

- Preparation for the Local Development Plan began in 2010 with extensive public consultation on the proposed Local Development Plan in 2013.
- A formal Examination by the Scottish Government Department of Environment and Appeals held between February and September 2014.
- On 24 February 2015, Scottish Ministers formally directing the CNPA to make a change to a housing allocation in Carrbridge before adopting the Plan.

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

- The content being much simpler and easier to understand.
- Acknowledgement that the Supplementary Guidance that accompanies the Local Development Plan would be laid before the Planning Committee for approval at their next meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2015.
- Agreement that to get to the present stage a lot of work had been done by a great many people.
- Eagerness to view the Development Programme Action Programme.
- Thanks to the staff involved for getting the Local Development Plan to this point.

25. Rebecca Badger left the room at this point for the duration of the discussion on the Carrbridge element of this Paper.

26. Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning & Rural Development, referred to paragraphs 5 and 6 of the Paper which sets out the policy position on the Ministerial Direction in relation to the Carrbridge site. He noted that while the Ministerial Direction is to consider modifying the Local Development Plan, the Plan cannot be adopted unless the modification is made or Ministers formally withdraw their Direction.
27. Murray Ferguson added that he was aware that all Board Members had been sent a letter from the Badenoch & Strathspey Conservation Group in the past twenty-four hours and made the following points:
- This letter suggests the Cairngorms National Park Authority speak to the Scottish Government's Chief Planner. Murray Ferguson confirmed that the CNPA had communicated with the Chief Planner on a number of occasions.
  - The Authority had taken legal advice and the slight risk of legal challenge had been highlighted to officers and this was conveyed to the Board.
28. Murray Ferguson drew attention to the three related Carrbridge planning applications which were refused by the Planning Committee on 13 March 2015. The decision notices had been issued to the applicant. No response has been received to date. Applicants have three months from the decision date to submit an appeal.
29. Murray Ferguson proposed three options should now be considered by the Board:
- Option 1: A passive approach where nothing is done by the CNPA and the developer is left to choose how to proceed on the site;
- Option 2: The CNPA proactively engages with the developer and encourages them to enter into pre-application discussions, or;
- Option 3: The CNPA works with the community, the developer and other stakeholders to draw up non-statutory guidance for the Carrbridge site which would be brought back before the Board. If adopted, the guidance would ~~then~~ be a relevant material consideration material when determining any future applications on the site.
- Murray Ferguson stated that Option 3 was the Planning Services' preferred option because it would enable the developer to come back with a proposal that meets both the policies in the Local Development Plan and community needs.
30. The Board considered the context and the three options and made the following points:
- Disappointment that the level of response from the community during the consultation on the Local Development Plan was not as high as when the Carrbridge applications were laid before the Planning Committee at their last meeting.
  - Unanimous agreement that Option 3 was the preferred option to move this forward.



31. **The Board agreed that they were content to adopt the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan (as modified) and as directed by Scottish Ministers.**

32. **The Board also agreed to Option 3 that staff should proceed to work with the community, the developer and other appropriate groups to draw up non-statutory guidance in relation to the Carrbridge site.**

33. **Action:**

- i. **Planning Staff to convene a group and begin preparing non-statutory guidance for the Carrbridge site and report back regularly to the Planning Committee on progress.**

34. Rebecca Badger returned to the meeting at this point.

### **Core Paths Plan (Paper 5)**

35. Adam Streeter Smith, Outdoor Access Officer, introduced Paper 5 which seeks the Board's formal adoption of the Core Paths Plan and advised how it will help deliver Active Cairngorms. He highlighted that as a result of the Reporter's decision the High Burnside Link Path (LBS124) had been removed from the Core Paths Plan.

36. The Board considered Paper 5 and the following points were discussed:

- The ongoing maintenance of core paths and the setting up of path care groups.
- Query as to why the two bridges recently built by COAT on the ED66 7 bridges walk didn't appear in the Core Paths Plan? Adam Streeter-Smith advised that it had been included and would work to amend the name to make it clearer.
- The key tests and what the consequences of failure would be.
- Disappointment with the removal of the High Burnside path in Aviemore.
- The lessons learnt for future core paths plans.

37. **The Board agreed to:**

- a) **Adopt the Core Paths Plan for the Cairngorms National Park;**
- b) **Note how the Plan will help deliver the forthcoming Active Cairngorms strategy;**
- c) **Note how the Plan will be implemented and monitored.**

### **38. Actions:**

- i. Kate Howie to pass on volunteering suggestions for the care and maintenance of Core paths**
- ii. Gordon Riddler to consider the detail with Adam Streeter-Smith in relation to the Ballater paths.**

39. The meeting paused for lunch at this point.

### **Learning and Inclusion (Paper 6)**

40. Alan Smith, Outdoor Learning Officer, introduced Paper 6 which presents the work on Learning and Inclusion and looks ahead to the focus for this work in our next Corporate Plan period.

41. The Convenor reminded the Board that £20,000 had been allocated in the Operational Plan towards this work and that the staff would be required to source additional funding to fund further activities.

42. The Board engaged in a full discussion and the following points were made:

- The difference to young people and the impact on their career choices and opportunities that outdoor learning has made. Elspeth Grant agreed to circulate to the Board the Keep Scotland Beautiful report on the impact of outdoor learning on young people.
- Had changes in social structure been looked into and could these be tracked and mapped? Alan Smith advised that it had been looked into as part of the outdoor learning project however too many variables were found that made it difficult to pin down whether the outcome was a result of the National Park experiences.
- The need not to lose sight of disadvantaged young people in rural areas.
- The suggestion to engage with other disadvantaged groups through the Inclusive Cairngorms network.
- Where teachers can tap into this information online and get involved.
- How to continue to raise awareness of outdoor learning.
- How to sustain young people's experience.
- Suggestion that this is an area where corporate sponsorship could be attracted.
- The need to target 16-24 year age group and school leavers.

43. **The Board:**

- a) Noted the progress to date delivering work on learning and inclusion;**

- b) **Considered how to make the most of our strategic partnerships in learning and inclusion and provided the following steer:**
- i. **The need to focus on outcomes rather than outputs.**
  - ii. **Disadvantaged youths are not always in urban locations but also in rural areas.**
  - iii. **More work to be done with Young Scot to target 16-24 year old.**
  - iv. **The need to promote this work to a wider audience.**

**44. Action:**

- i. **Elsbeth Grant to circulate the Keep Scotland Beautiful Report to the Board.**

**Corporate Plan Delivery Progress Report (Paper 7)**

45. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services, presented Paper 7 which gives a 6 monthly overview of the progress with delivery of the agreed programmes of work set out in the Authority's Corporate Plan. He drew the Board's attention to the lower quadrates of Item 6 on Annex 2 and advised that it is updated annually and therefore more current information will soon be available to show the position at the end of the 2014/15 operational year.

46. In discussion the Board made the following points:

- In relation to formal complaints, should a summary of the types of complaints be included? David Cameron drew the Board's attention to paragraph 3 of the Paper where the nature of complaints had been set out in general terms and agreed to provide more information in future reports.
- A forecasted break even out turn for the end of this financial year was welcomed.

**47. In conclusion the Board agreed to note the progress.**

**48. Action:**

- i. **David Cameron to include a summary of the types of complaints as agreed above.**

**NPPP Annual Progress Report (Paper 8)**

49. Hamish Trench, Director of Conservation and Visitor Services, introduced Paper 8 which reports the annual progress in delivering the Cairngorms National Park

Partnership Plan and requests that the Board consider any areas where further discussion at Board meetings or with partners is required.

50. Grant Moir advised that in future staff were looking to bring a combined Corporate Plan and National Park Partnership Plan update report to avoid repetition which would detail what the Cairngorms National Park Authority are doing as well as what partners were doing.

51. The Board considered the Paper and the discussion centred around the following:

- Concern that there was no safety net to pick up early enough that something was going wrong.
- The need to have more precision on targets such as interim targets to help tracking and monitoring in terms of reporting.
- The difficulty in the Cairngorms National Park Authority not collecting the data themselves, having to use aggregate data as collected from local authorities and not having any influence on when the data is collected.
- The need to smarten up the targets to include explanatory text at the bottom that explains the halt in progress in respect of the amber and grey targets.
- Acknowledgement that in reference to the Wildlife Estates Initiatives, coverage of 85% of the land area in the Cairngorms National Park by WEI participants is an achievement.
- Praise for the detail described in Annex 2.
- Suggestion was made to hold a future Board discussion session on monitoring.

52. **The Board noted the progress.**

53. **Action:**

- i. **Staff to provide further interpretation to the progress of the targets in the combined Corporate Plan and National Park Partnership Plan Update to be presented to the Board in December 2015.**
- ii. **Staff to develop a discussion topic around monitoring.**

### **Cairngorms Research Strategy (Paper 9)**

54. Hamish Trench, Director of Conservation and Visitor Services, introduced Paper 9 which presents an update on the Cairngorms Research Strategy and added that since the writing of the paper, confirmation of funding had been received by from the Macaulay Development Trust to fund the Research Event as detailed in paragraph 10 of the paper.

55. **The Board noted the progress.**

56. **Action:**           **None.**

### **Update on Cairngorms LEADER Programme (Paper 10)**

57. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services, introduced Paper 10 which updates the Board on the development of the Cairngorms LEADER Programme for 2014 to 2020. David added that the LAG would begin to invite applications for 2 of the 6 themes, Rural Development and -Heritage from 11 June 2015, provided that final approval to the programme was received from Scottish Government as the Managing Authority.

58. **The Board noted the progress.**

59. **Action:**           **None.**

### **Cairngorms and Glenmore Partnership Update (Paper 11)**

60. Hamish Trench, Director of Conservation and Visitor Services, introduced Paper 11 which updates the progress in the Partnership including development of the Cairngorm and Glenmore Strategy.

61. The Board considered the Paper and the following items were discussed:

- Was a target date for publishing the Strategy available? Hamish advised that the liaison group would be discussing this at their next meeting on 29 April 2015 with the view to going out to public consultation from July to September 2015 and it will be brought back to the Partnership Board and the CNPA Board at key stages during this process.
- Would the consultation be extended to include visitor consultation? Hamish advised that visitors were part of it but consultation would be aimed at a wider range of people to enable anyone with an interest in the area to engage in it.
- The need to capture the views of visitors to the area in the public consultation.
- The organisation that carries out the Visitor Survey are providing a response that details views from the people interviewed in the Cairngorm and Glenmore areas.

62. **The Board noted the progress.**

63. **Action:**           **None.**

## **Election of Convenor (Paper 12)**

64. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services, introduced Paper 12 which notifies the Board that the election for the position of Convenor will take place at the following Board meeting, to be held in June 2015, and summarise the process for this election.

65. **The Board noted the Paper.**

66. **Action:               None.**

## **AOCB**

67. Grant Moir, Chief Executive advised the Board that the Board Business session on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2015 had been cancelled and that the next one was scheduled for the 29<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

68. The Convenor reminded the Board that the National Parks Partnership Limited advert had been released and requested that the Board encourage applications within their circles.

69. The Convenor welcomed Dan Harris to the Development Planning Team staff.

70. The suggestion was made that, at the start of each meeting of the Board, Members could give a brief update of what they have done on CNPA business since the last meeting. The Convenor agreed to think about the suggestion in more detail.

## **Date of Next Meeting**

71. Next formal Board meeting to be held on 26 June 2015, The Grant Arms, Granttown-on-Spey.

72. Meeting ended at 15.07