

Cairngorms National Park Authority
Business Continuity Planning Advice Note - Coronavirus
Board and Planning Committee Decision Making

With the first cases of Coronavirus now confirmed in Scotland there is a heightened risk of service disruptions created through both potential absences through illness; disruption to travel and potential advice to minimise large scale face to face meetings. The Authority is conducting a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) led review of potential service disruption.

The threat posed to Board and Planning Committee decision making has been identified as a key risk meriting more detailed contingency planning.

Board standing orders establish the following requirements:

9. The quorum of the NPA board will be half of its total number plus one - in other words, 10 Members. This will apply regardless of vacancies in membership. No business will be transacted at a board meeting unless a quorum is present. If the Convener of the meeting finds during a board meeting that the number of members present has reduced below the quorum, the meeting shall end at that point. All attendance and absences shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. The quorum for committees will be as agreed for each committee individually.

10. Participation will normally be in person, and must be in person for meetings arranged to conduct elections of Convener and Deputy Convener and elections of Planning Committee Convener and Planning Committee Deputy Convener. Participation at meetings other than those scheduled for elections may exceptionally (with agreement of the Convener of the meeting) be by telephone or video-conference provided the Member's contribution is fully accessible to all members and public attending the meeting. In these cases, such members will be deemed to be present and constitute part of the board attendance for the purpose of the meeting and quorum.

Contingency Planning

Scottish Government advice on travel and public meetings, together with the potential for illness amongst Board members may prevent Board meetings being held as required by these standing orders. Therefore, the following contingency plans are proposed:

1. In the event of either Scottish Government deeming that special measures are to be put in place to deal with Coronavirus containment, this BCP response for governance of the Board's operations shall be put in place.
2. Board meetings will be designed as private meetings, not open for public attendance, although papers will be published as normal. This will allow contingency plans for meetings to be put in place that do not need to consider means of opening communications of meetings for public access.
3. The Authority will consider arrangements for establishing telephone or video conference meetings should these facilities be required to conduct business – deeming implementation of these BCP measures in this instance to satisfy the “exceptional circumstances” cited in paragraph 10 of standing orders.

4. Senior staff will prepare a list of potential decision items anticipated to come to the Board, Planning Committee or other standing Committees over the next 3 months. If the Convener considers that circumstances around the Authority's BCP response to Coronavirus make it appropriate to seek to vary the quorum requirements established in standing orders, to allow for decisions to continue to be taken on any decision items in the event of assessed risk of significant levels of absence through illness and / or travel restrictions, approval to revise quorum may be secured by email correspondence. Email requests to Board members to vary quorum shall be authorised by the Convener or Deputy Convener, and coordinated by the Director of Corporate Services or another designated senior manager in their absence.
5. In line with paragraph 21 of the standing orders, the Convener should establish nominated Board members to take decisions on Board meeting arrangements in the event of both the Convener and Deputy Convener being indisposed during the period of the BCP response to a Coronavirus outbreak.
6. Provisions set out in points 2 and 3 shall also be made for Planning Committee meetings.
7. As with point 4 covering Board meetings, the Planning Committee Convener should determine whether quorum amendments need to be made for any decision items and seek approval to vary quorum for Planning Committee meetings by email. The email correspondence shall be authorised by the Planning Committee Convener or Planning Committee Vice Convener, and coordinated by the Director of Corporate Services or another designated senior manager in their absence.
8. In line with paragraph 21 of the standing orders, the Convener should establish nominated Board members to take decisions on Planning Committee meeting arrangements in the event of both the Planning Committee Convener and Planning Committee Vice Convener being indisposed during the period of the BCP response to a Coronavirus outbreak

David Cameron
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