



Annex 1

Title: Board Fees Policy Review

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1. Background

- a) In 2019 the Board agreed a revised Board Fees Policy which brought in a position of a 30 day “base rate” with the ability to top up an extra 6 days through volunteering for additional duties. It also brought in a system of offsetting to allow members to use additional work undertaken on behalf of the Park to compensate for any missed days.
- b) This policy replaced the 2017 Board Fees Policy of automatic deductions for any missed meetings which often led to the Board Members who were undertaking considerable extra duties on behalf of the Park being penalised for the occasional missed meeting. The 2019 review was undertaken due to significant complaints from Board Members about the system.
- c) The 2019 review of Board Fees was carried out by the Convener and Chair of the Staffing & Recruitment Committee with all members being asked their views on the current system and their views on any future revisions to it. From this open consultation two specific options were scoped and put to members to indicate their views on with a significant majority opting for the current system. This was then ratified following a vote by the Board at a formal meeting on 28 June 2019. The paper from the meeting can be found here -
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/resource/docs/boardpapers/28062019/190628CNPABdPaper1AABoardFeesReviewRecommendation%20-%20xmcc.pdf>
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/resource/docs/boardpapers/28062019/190628CNPABdPaper1Annex1OffsettingBoardFeesReview.pdf>
and the minute of the meeting can be found here -
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/resource/docs/boardpapers/28062019/190628BoardV1.1.pdf>.



- d) It was agreed at the 30 June 2023 Resources Committee meeting that some minor revisions to some aspects of the policy might be appropriate for review after four years of operation. These proposed revisions are outlined in section two.

2. Proposed Revisions

2.1. Number of Base Days

- a) Under the current policy all members receive a 30 day base. Detailed calculations were done in 2019 to consider the time commitment required for different meetings and to reflect the schedule of meetings at the time. It was calculated to cover all scheduled formal and informal meetings in the year along with associated reading and preparation time. Since these calculations were done four years ago there has been some changes in Board duties including a reduction in the number of Planning Committees by two a year and a corresponding increase of two informal Board days.
- b) However, over the past couple of years there has generally been the need to add one extra day on an ad hoc basis for training or other purposes which was not included in the original calculation. It is therefore proposed that this base figure should be revised up to 32 days on the understanding that this figure also covers some degree of non formal meeting commitments e.g. occasional attendance at community meetings locally.

2.2. Community Meeting Attendance

- a) A point of discussion when the policy was first agreed was around whether members should be able to gain top up through attendance at Community Councils. There was significant discussion about Community Councillors and local authority Councillors receiving top up for this as it could be viewed as dual mandate. At that point it was agreed that directly elected members would be eligible for the full top up allocation associated with their community councils, but councillors would only receive 50% to recognise the dual mandate.
- b) Attendance at Community Councils has continued to be very patchy with some community councils not being attended by the Board Member who is receiving top up allocations for it.
- c) Therefore it is proposed to remove top up for Community Councils in line with the above recommendation to increase the number of base days and if necessary the



Convener may allocate Members additional time for attendance of community meetings if there is special demands due to local major issues. They will only be eligible if they are there solely in their National Park capacity. Therefore those with dual mandates e.g. Community Councillors / Local Authority Councillors would not be eligible for any additional top up if they were also attending in that capacity.

- d) This more flexible approach recognises that sometimes members may experience a significant additional workload due to a major local issue and that time may go beyond what is reasonable to expect a member to undertake without a top up. It also recognises that in some communities there may not be a functioning community council, but that other community organisations such as development trusts may be playing a critical role in representing the community voice and this revision recognises that too.

2.3. Deductions Provision

- a) The current policy allows the Convener to impose deductions if a member's attendance falls below a threshold - currently 85%. In practice this is an awkward percentage to use as it equates to a day and a half in every ten days and as almost all business is done in full days and leads to the attendance threshold being 80% in practice. It is proposed to revise this in the policy to 90% and move to a system of automatic deductions for days missed below this, except in cases of Members illness or where compassionate leave may apply (as agreed by the Convener). Deductions would be applied at the end of the quarter in line with current policy based on a six month period.

2.4. External and Internal Groups Membership

- a) Under the current policy, Board Members, volunteer and are then nominated by the Convener to attend various external and internal groups and conferences. These commitments are eligible for top up allocations, which have not been reviewed since 2019.
- b) The Resources Committee agreed that the current Convener and incoming Convener would review the list of groups and consider the current membership of these and seek new volunteers from the Board. It is proposed that the full list with up to date top up allocations is circulated to the Board to volunteer for and that current appointments will end unless reappointed.



- c) A full list of new appointments will be made by the incoming Convener in August 2023 in consultation with the current and incoming Deputy Convener.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to agree the revisions to the Board Fees Policy:

- a) An increase to the base day allocation to 32 days to include community meeting attendance.
- b) To remove top up payments for Community Council meetings in line with increased number of base days.
- c) Increase the attendance threshold to 90% and agree automatic deductions for non-authorised absences.
- d) A full list of new appointments to external and internal groups be made in August 2023.