



For discussion

Title: Cairngorms National Park Authority 2024/25 budget and operational plan

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Purpose

1. This paper sets out the Park Authority's proposed budget for the 2024/25 financial year.
2. The paper provides the Board with the opportunity to consider the overall budget position together with the impact of any key assumptions made in establishing budget estimates.
3. The paper also presents the proposed operational plan for 2024/25 to allow members to scrutinise and take assurance on the deployment of available resources in providing a balanced approach to delivery of the Park Authority's agreed strategic objectives set out in the approved National Park Partnership Plan and Corporate Plan.

Recommendations

The Board is invited to:

- a) approve the Cairngorms National Park Authority budget and operational plan for 2024/25 as set out in this paper.

Overview of draft 2024/25 budget position

4. The budget sets out the Authority's proposal for the application of core resources provided by Scottish Government through the National Parks' budget and through other Scottish Government budgets for peatland restoration, community led local development (CLLD) and nature recovery. In addition, 2024/25 is the first full year of the Cairngorms 2030 (C2030) programme, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). Delivery against this major project has been integrated into the budget for the year.



5. The Park Authority has yet to receive a final grant award letter for 2024/25 from Scottish Government. We also await final notification of the allocation for grants in support of our peatland restoration work, and for CLLD.
6. Grant-in-aid for 2024/25 is set to increase by £0.977 million from £8.144m to £9.121m, a 12% increase in cash funding allocated to the Cairngorms National Park Authority by Scottish Government for the coming financial year.
7. Our understanding is that the allocations of grant-in-aid, of funding for peatland restoration and of Nature Restoration funding are relatively final and secure, pending finalisation and receipt of grant award letters.
8. Funding for CLLD is still to be finalised, and the figure of £300k included in the budget represents our best estimate; we await decisions from Scottish Government on both the total funding available for CLLD, and how it will be allocated across partner bodies. This presents very limited risk to the overall budget position presented. The minimum value of grant financing for staff salaries has been confirmed, covering these staff commitments. Any variation in assumed income may therefore be equally offset by varying the provision available for CLLD funding awards.
9. This position is relatively common at this point in setting the Park Authority's budget for the year ahead. As part of our ongoing budget monitoring activity through the year, we will consider the sufficiency of income alongside the management of expenditure.
10. Other sources of income (£0.250m) included in the draft budget position are:
 - Planning fees, and
 - Bank interest (£0.070m)
11. The overview of the draft budget position for 2024/25 is presented in Appendix 1; this position includes both operational plan activities and delivery of the Cairngorms 2030 project. It shows a balanced position. Appendix 2 provides a comparison of the proposed 2024/25 budget with the approved budget for 2023/24.
12. As is clear from Appendix 2, the allocation of Grant-in-Aid has increased from £8.144m to £9.121m (£0.977m 12%). However, the increase of close to £1m is



weighted towards capital funds (£0.710m). Indeed, capital allocations have increased from £0.600m in 2022/23 to £1.810m in 2024/25. Our ability to take advantage of this funding has been key to budget development for 2024/25.

13. To date we have used capital (CDEL) allocations to fund the purchase of fixed assets (CDEL-direct), to develop pathways and to support landscape restoration projects as an intermediary providing grant support to landowners and other public bodies (CDEL-indirect). Typically, projects funded through CDEL-indirect, involve physical alteration of the landscape, such as building or improving pathways, the work involved in restoration of peatland, and the management of catchments. The sums involved, (excluding peatland restoration, which has its own ring-fenced funding allocation) have been around £0.600m per annum.
14. Our response to the change in weighting of the budget towards capital funding has included:
 - A proposal to establish a Climate Adaptation fund providing financial resources to grant applicants.
 - Increasing the capital allocation to our aims around the accessible path and cycle network.
 - The design of nature and conservation activities to include more capital works.
15. Information on the proposed budget for staff salaries is provided in paragraphs 19 to 22 below. Staffing costs for 2024/25 (excluding any potential vacancy savings) account for 41% of the total operational plan income shown of £13.701m. In the budget for 2023/24 the like-for-like costs were 38% of total operational plan income (£13.663m). Contributors to the increase in staffing costs year on year include:
 - 2024/25 pay award £0.333m
 - Enforced increase in employer pension contributions £0.77m
16. It should be noted that for budget control purposes, the operational plan investment in Nature and Conservation actions has been split across the operational plan budget line and a separate Nature Restoration Fund line to ensure the appropriate application of the earmarked nature recovery grant. Total investment for Nature and Conservation in Appendix 2 is £0.961m for 2024/25 (Nature restoration £0.450m plus Nature and climate £0.511m) compared with £0.818m in the previous year.
17. Similarly, investment in the “People” actions of the Corporate and Operational Plans stems from funding through both the core National Parks grant and earmarked



Community Led Local Development grants on which the Park Authority partners with the Cairngorms Trust as Accountable Body. Again, for budget control purposes, these two strands of activity have been developed separately in the budget figures. Total investment in the People elements of the Park Authority's plans total £0.533m for 2024/25, compared with £0.607m in the prior year.

18. The following sections present some specific points of estimate and judgement in the development of these budget estimates for consideration by the Board. These aspects of estimation and assumption have previously been considered by the Board's Resources Committee at its meeting on 26 January 2023.

Staffing Investment

19. Staffing levels

- a) The Park Authority's establishment will increase significantly in 2024/25. There will be a need to provide resource to the Cairngorms 2030 (C2030) project (14 FTE) as highlighted in the paper presented to the board in June 2023 prior to submission of the C2030 bid. However, most of the cost of new posts established will be recoverable through the project. In addition, cost recovery will be available through C2030 for existing posts; these staff have been paid for from core funds during the gap between the end of the development phase of the project, and the start of the delivery phase. The full year cost (including prospective pay award) of new C2030 posts is estimated at £0.568m, with existing C2030 funded posts created in the development phase and continuing into the delivery phase adding a further £0.520m (£1.088m in total). These costs are recoverable from the C2030 programme budget and are reported to members for transparency – they do not impact on the resource cover to be provided from our grant-in-aid allocations.
- b) There are three vacancies (3FTE) that we have modelled at present for recruitment in 2024/25 and provided for within the staffing budget. The full year cost of the provision for recruitment into these vacancies, which support delivery of planning and corporate services, is estimated at £0.159m. Our usual approach to recruitment will be applied, with a business case for recruitment into these vacancies tested prior to any recruitment, as part of our standard processes; any decision not to take forward the recruitment process will allow for reallocation of budgets elsewhere.



20.2024/25 pay considerations

- a) Scottish Government has developed a 2-year approach to its own main award. There is pressure on the Authority to follow suit with awards over two years that, taken together, provide similar remuneration levels to the Scottish Government's main award.
- b) A key point of estimate and judgement therefore concerns the provisions made for the 2024/25 pay award. It is anticipated that the award will vary amongst the salary bandings and will be a combination of fixed sums and percentage increases.
- c) The budget includes a pay award impact of £0.333m (excluding costs rechargeable through C2030) which, combined with the award made in 2023/24, is designed to achieve an increase averaging around 10% for staff over the 2 years from April 2023 to March 2025. This will be broadly in line with the overall impact of the Scottish Government Main Group settlement already agreed with staff and their unions, and we understand in keeping with the general approach of other public bodies in our sector. We await follow up pay policy advice from Scottish Government. A more detailed update on the potential pay award for 2024/25 will be presented in the coming months to the Board's Resources Committee in accordance with our established, agreed governance practices, prior to commencing consultation on this matter with the staff group and their staff and union representatives, through our Staff Consultative Forum.

Breakdown of total payroll budget 2024/25 including posts recovered from third party income	£m
Full year cost of existing staff pre 2024/25 award	5.770
Increase in employer pension rate	0.077
Award 2024/25	0.333
Cost of existing staff	6.180
Vacancies for recruitment Cairngorms National Park Authority	0.159
New posts C2030	0.568
Total budget estimate 2024/25	6.907

21. Payroll recoveries



- a) Estimates have been made of the levels of staff payroll recoveries from external funding sources. Current estimates are for recoveries through C2030 of £1.088m in 2024/25.
- b) A proportion of the salary costs of staff engaged on Community Led Local Development (CLLD) will also be recoverable, assuming that CLLD funding will be awarded in broadly the same amount for the coming year and with the same allowances for administration and animation costs: salary costs of £0.096m are budgeted, of which around £0.067m are expected to be recovered, leaving a cost of around £0.029 to be met by the Authority.

Breakdown of recoverable payroll costs 2024/25	£m
Existing posts C2030	0.520
New posts C2030	0.568
Total C2030	1.088
CLLD posts	0.067
Total recoverable	1.154

22. Vacancy savings and recruitment delays

- a) In arriving at budget estimates for staffing, we make an estimate of payroll savings that may be achieved over the course of the year from staff turnover and management of vacant posts. The payroll budget is not therefore set to cover full establishment. Rather, it is adjusted to allow for a level of expected vacancies through turnover and recruitment timetables.
- b) The estimates presented provide for a 1% saving in payroll for staff costs that are not recoverable from other sources of income. This provides for £0.071m of reduction in the value of payroll that would otherwise be budgeted for. This estimate of possible savings is significantly lower than was applied in 2023/24 (5% of payroll budget, £248k). Vacancy savings have not been realised as anticipated during 2023/24 and, given the opportunities provided by C2030 and ongoing Park Partnership Plan activities, significant staff turnover is not anticipated for 2024/25. This reduction in anticipated vacancy savings has therefore contributed significantly to the increase in staff budget for 2024/25 as compared to the prior year.



- c) In addition, a small allowance has been made for savings arising from recruitment delays. It has been assumed that the three Cairngorms National Park Authority vacant posts will not be filled until the summer of 2024, saving a quarter of the year's salary costs (£0.056). In addition, payroll savings may be available if staff currently in core posts are appointed to C2030 roles, and their original post is not backfilled. Further consideration will be given to this option and could lead to savings of between £50k and £185k if required; a prudent approach has been adopted, and no allowance has been made for this potential saving in the budget presented.
- d) Using this modelling, the net cost for staff salaries in 2024/25 is therefore £5,626m:

	£m
Total budget estimate 2024/25	6.907
Total recoverable payroll costs	(1.154)
	5.753
Allowance for possible recruitment delays	(0.056)
	5.697
Allowance for vacancy savings	(0.071)
Net cost for staff salaries in 2024/25	5.626

Inflationary impacts and running costs

23. The budget for running costs has been built on the outturn forecast for 2023/24. Inflationary increases of 3% have been applied, reflecting the Bank of England's estimates that inflation will fall from its current level of 4.6% to a target level of 2%. The budget approach represents an expectation of the average rate over the course of the financial year. An increase of 0.5% in the budgeted rate is equivalent to increased costs of £4.5k; the budget presented would remain in balance if the average inflation rate were to increase to 3.5%.
24. Over the course of 2023/24 we have experienced noticeable pressure on the budgets for power and mileage. The budget for 2024/25 reflects these increases as well as an inflationary uplift.
25. Software licences are now an essential part of the organisation's infrastructure, with our core programmes available only as 'Software As A Service' (SAAS). The increase



in staffing levels and the need for applications with greater functionality (e.g. Microsoft Project for project management) is resulting in higher costs year on year.

26. An allocation of £0.045m has been made to provide scope for additional procurement guidance required as a result of the anticipated increase in procurement and contracting.

27. Efficiency savings

a) It is likely that the requirement to achieve a 5% efficiency saving (£0.367m) will be included in grant award letters. Subject to the terms of this requirement being clarified, the current understanding is that the efficiency savings requirements will be met by containing ongoing inflationary increases and managing staff vacancies where this is possible. The table below outlines how this might be achieved:

	£'000
Vacancy savings	71
Delayed recruitment	56
Delay in backfilling for staff appointed to C2030	159
Containment of inflationary increases	8
Review of IT and shared services	73
	367

Operational plan investment

28. The full operational plan, flowing from the core objectives of the Corporate Plan, is set out at Appendix 3 to this paper.

29. The operational plan covers a huge range of investment by the Park Authority in the National Park. Two elements to highlight to the board are the Climate Adaptation Fund and the Red Deer Hind Incentive Scheme.

30. Climate Adaptation Fund

This fund will help with capital investment in climate adaptation and will be open to individual businesses, incorporated community bodies, registered charities and business associations. Climate change adaptation is about responding to the changes that we have seen in our climate over the last few decades, and preparing



for the challenges that we will face as our climate continues to change. The fund will have four guiding principles:

- a) Adaptation – projects will contribute to climate adaptation within the Cairngorms National Park that help deliver the national Climate Change Adaptation Programme.
- b) Partnership Plan Outcomes – projects will contribute to the outcomes of the National Park Partnership Plan
- c) Nature Based Solutions – projects will promote nature-based solutions and green engineering to help adapt to climate change effects, contributing to habitat and species recovery in the National Park.
- d) Economy – Projects will endeavour to maximise their contribution to local employment and economic activity within the National Park.

31. Red Deer Hind Incentive Scheme

The Park Authority is developing a two-year trial to incentivise increased red deer hind culls in the National Park. Operational details will be discussed with Deer Management Groups in the Park during May with the scheme starting before the end of the female hind close season. This will be funded through the Nature Restoration Fund.

32. Appendix 2 highlights the increase in the Park Authority's financial contribution to the delivery phase of the C2030 Programme. The full programme contribution to the C2030 programme has been set at £2.250m over the 5 years of the project (£0.450m per annum) and this secures additional cash funding of £19m over the 5 years of delivery.

33. In line with recent years, the operational plan has been budgeted without “over-programming”. The total value of the operational plan is established within the parameters of total income expected to be available at the commencement of the financial year. No additional provision has been made for slippage over the course of the year through budgeting for a greater value of operational plan investments than are capable of being covered by funding levels. This is a prudent approach, given the various uncertainties in income levels and expenditure pressures in the coming year. If slippage or underspend arises in any projects or budget areas, management action



can be taken to reallocate available resources to priority areas of investment or to cover other emerging budget pressures.

34. Leverage

- a) The Park Authority continues to secure significant leverage in inward investment to the Cairngorms through its deployment of resources in contributions to partnership projects and in securing grant funding from non-government sources. Significant leverage over 2024/25 will continue to come from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) through the Cairngorms 2030 Programme. A summary of the leverage position established by the Authority's successful ongoing relationship with NLHF is shown below:

Project/ programme funding	2024/25 budget proposals	2023/24 budget	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cairngorms Capercaillie Project	-	556	(556)
Cairngorms 2030 (based on cash flow projections)	2,520	1,365	1,155
Other significant income under management	2,520	1,921	599
Scottish Government and other core income	13,701	13,663	38
Total income under management	16,221	15,584	637

- b) The amount of funding anticipated in 2024/25 (£2,520) is 13% of the total cash receivable across the 5 years of the programme. The twenty projects within the programme are of varying scale, with some of the larger projects (particularly those involving construction activities) planned into the later years of the programme.



Risk

35. Budget responses to the live risks on the strategic risk register are shown in Appendix 4.

36. Financial risks inherent in the budget presented include the following:

Budget area	Value £'000	Nature of risk
Funding		
Grant-in aid	9,121	Formal confirmation awaited
Peatland	3,580	
Nature Restoration	450	
CLLD	300	
Other income	250	Other income not assured
Staff costs		
Pay award impact	333	Depends on SG pay policy and stakeholder agreement
Staffing levels vacancies for recruitment	159	Business case to be tested prior to recruitment; cost depends on when/ if posts filled
Vacancy savings – staff turnover	(71)	Turnover cannot be predicted with certainty
Vacancy savings – recruitment delays	(56)	Commencement date of new posts uncertain
Impact of inflation	9	Each 1% increase in inflation poses a £9k risk to budget management
CDEL proposals		
Climate adaptation fund	360	Fund may be under/ over-subscribed



37. Next steps

- a) Following board consideration and approval of a budget for 2024/25, budget allocations will be confirmed to budget holders to allow plans for delivery over the coming financial year to commence.

- b) We will continue to provide budget monitoring reports to the Board's Resources Committee over the course of the year ahead, identifying any significant budget variations and action in managing those variations.

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Appendix 1 – Overview of 2024/25 budget development

	Operational Plan		C2030		Total
	Resource £'000	Capital £'000	Resource £'000	Capital £'000	£'000
Income					
National Parks Grant in Aid - Resource	7,311				7,311
National Parks Grant in Aid - Capital		1,810			1,810
Peatland grant - capital		3,000			3,000
Peatland grant - resource - staff	580				580
Nature Restoration Fund		450			450
CLLD	300				300
Cairngorms 2030 programme funding			1,725	795	2,520
Other income	250				250
Total income	8,441	5,260	1,725	795	16,221
Expenditure					
Operational plan					
Climate adaptation fund	10	360			370
Peatland programme	50	3,000			3,050
Nature Restoration Fund		450			450
Nature	299	212	120	373	1,004
People	290		231	23	543
Place	420	440	206	381	1,447
Comms	166	60			226
CLLD	150	93			243
Corporate	257	135	55	18	465
Programme contributions		450			450
	1,642	5,200	612	795	8,249
Running costs					
Board compensation	192				192
Staff compensation	5,626		1,088		6,714
Other board costs	37				37
Other staff costs	226		25		251
Facilities	373				373
Capitalisation of leases		60			60
IT and professional	346				346
	6,799	60	1,113	0	7,973
Total expenditure	8,441	5,260	1,725	795	16,221
Surplus	0	0	0	0	0



Appendix 2 – 2024/25 budget proposal compared to prior year budget

	2024/25 Budget proposal £'000	2023/24 Approved budget £'000	Movement increase/ (reduction) £'000	
Income				
National Parks Grant in Aid - Resource	7,311	7,044	267	4% increase in resource allocation
National Parks Grant in Aid - Capital	1,810	1,100	710	65% increase in capital allocation
Peatland grant - capital	3,000	4,143	(1,143)	Reduction in allocation across all peatland restoration delivery partners
Peatland grant - resource - staff	580	614	(34)	
Nature Restoration Fund	450	250	200	Additional £50k allocated mid-year 2023; Red Hind Incentive fund
CLLD	300	330	(30)	Best estimate of likely award
Cairngorms 2030 programme funding	2,520	-	2,520	First full year of the programme
Other income	250	182	68	Additional bank interest
Total income	16,221	13,663	2,558	
Expenditure				
Operational plan				
Climate adaptation fund	370		370	New initiative for 2024/25
Nature Restoration Fund	450	250	200	Red Hind Incentive fund payments
Peatland programme	3,050	4,328	(1,278)	Reduction in delivery appropriate to grant allocation
Nature	511	568	(57)	
CLLD	300	300	0	
Less cost of CLLD staff included in running costs	(57)	(54)	(3)	
Cairngorms 2030 programme	1,407	-	1,407	First full year of the programme
People	290	307	(17)	



	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Place	860	865	(5)	
Comms	226	198	28	
Corporate	392	598	(206)	Significant level of one-off expenditure in 2023/24
Programme contributions	450	285	165	Agreed increase in contribution during delivery phase
	8,099	7,645	454	
Running costs				
Board compensation	192	192	(0)	
Staff compensation	5,697	5,143	554	Pay award/ increased e'er pension contributions
Anticipated saving through vacancy management	(71)	(248)	177	
Other staff and board costs	263	164	99	Travel and subsistence/ training costs
Facilities	373	520	(147)	Change in accounting treatment of leases
Capitalisation of leases	60	-	60	
IT and professional	346	261	85	Increase in legal fees and internal audit fees
Cairngorms 2030 programme	1,113	-	1,113	First full year of the programme
	7,972	6,032	1,940	
Total expenditure	16,221	13,677	2,544	
Surplus	0	(14)	14	



Appendix 3 – Operational plan

Corporate plan			Financial requirements				Staff resource	
Aim	Park Authority delivery	Thumbnail sketch	Resource	Capital	NRF	C2030	Operational plan	C2030
A1	Net zero							
	Delivering baseline report, monitor and annually report on progress towards CNP achieving net-zero and subsequently acting as a carbon sink	Climate Adaptation Fund – See Para 26	10,000	360,000			0.3	
	Lead on delivering Cairngorms 2030, empowering people to contribute to net zero ambitions	See cairngorms 2030 programme						
A2	Woodland expansion							
	Deliver 1,000 ha of new or expanded woodland with new and innovative uses of the Forest Grant Scheme as part of Cairngorms 2030.	Two woodland creation schemes are in preparation on Atholl Estates. These will enhance biodiversity and landscape around Glen Fender and Dalnamein.				Funding given directly to partners	1.0	
	Promote and administer a Woodland Challenge Fund to support land managers in the preparation of FGS applications.	This funding is designed to reduce the cost of developing woodland creation proposals by funding some surveys and the creation of plans.	10,000					
A3	Peatland restoration							
	Support and finance the restoration of peatland, with 6,500 hectares restored by 2027	We aim to run at least 12 peatland restoration projects across the Park in 2024-25. Within these projects we aim to bring some 1500ha of peatland under restoration.	50,000	3,000,000			8.0	



Corporate plan			Financial requirements				Staff resource	
Aim	Park Authority delivery	Thumbnail sketch	Resource	Capital	NRF	C2030	Operational plan	C2030
A4	Deer and herbivore impacts							
	Work with Deer Management Groups, as part of Cairngorms 2030, to deliver strategic land management plans to support a reduction in deer numbers.	Deer reductions will be achieved in some areas of the Park through a Section 7 Agreement. We will also seek to incentivise deer reductions through a venison subsidy scheme.	5,000				0.8	
	Investigate and trial models which achieve policy outcomes and retain skills and employment in the sector	Red Deer Hind Incentive Scheme – see para 26	150,000					
	Cairngorms 2030 3 Nature Recovery					200,000		
A5	Moorland management							
	Lead the East Cairngorms Moorland Partnership as a demonstration of sustainable moorland management delivering both public and private interests.	We will fund projects which enhance moorland management and biodiversity within ECMP.	20,000	30,000			0.6	
A6	Gamebird management							
	Establish baseline and assess impact of gamebird releases on native biodiversity. Produce report & recommendations on potential options based on impact assessment.	A partnership project with GWCT is underway to determine numbers of gamebirds released within 6 catchments in the Park. Further work in subsequent years will seek to determine the ecological and socio-economic impacts of those releases.	5,000				0.2	
A7	Fire management							



Corporate plan			Financial requirements				Staff resource	
Aim	Park Authority delivery	Thumbnail sketch	Resource	Capital	NRF	C2030	Operational plan	C2030
	Develop an integrated wildfire management plan	Develop a plan to improve wildfire prevention and improve response to any wildfires that do ignite. The plan will also seek to improve the resilience to wildfire in the landscape.	15,000				0.2	
	Establish a baseline of deep peat	The Wildlife Management and Muirburn Bill is very likely to define peatlands partly by means of peat depth. Estate muirburn plans will therefore need an assessment of peat depth across each estate. the methodology determining how this should be carried out is not yet agreed.						
A8	Farming							
	Deliver Cairngorms 2030 Future Farming projects supporting farmers in achieving carbon neutrality and helping address the twin crises in the context of a profitable farm business.					200,740	1.1	0.1
	Work with partners to support farmers and crofters through transitions	Nature Friendly Farming- i.e. waders, species rich grassland, mob grazing, goose management scheme, support delivery of enhancing biodiversity, CNAP objectives, NN and supporting productive farm businesses.	10,000	100,000				
A9	Freshwater systems							
	Deliver Cairngorms 2030 Climate Resilient Catchment projects demonstrating restoration complimentary to surrounding land use that benefits communities and wildlife.					53,700	0.5	2.1



Corporate plan			Financial requirements				Staff resource	
Aim	Park Authority delivery	Thumbnail sketch	Resource	Capital	NRF	C2030	Operational plan	C2030
	Develop long term approach to water management & abstraction	Support Catchment Management Partnerships and Fisheries Boards. 3 FTE supported to develop and deliver restoration projects across Dee, Esk & Don catchments		82,000				
		River and wetland restoration research and monitoring. Evaluate success of methods and biodiversity response, inform future works.	20,000		5,000			
A10	Ecological network							
	Design, deliver and showcase a template for Nature Networks to guide habitat restoration priorities and support land use decision making.	Opportunity mapping, production and design of Nature Networks map, call for sites.	12,000				0.8	
	Develop, publicize and administer a system for encouraging land managers to engage with creating Nature Networks including a call for sites.	Montane, pond, aspen and riparian woodland network delivery. Multiple projects working with delivery partners i.e. Dee-Shee riparian network.			145,000			
A11	Ecological restoration							
	Define and establish a baseline on land managed principally for ecosystem restoration. Encourage more land in the National Park to be managed principally for ecosystem restoration to meet the target in the Park Plan.	Freshwater ecological restoration focused on riparian planting and large woody structures.			50,000		0.7	
	Showcase ecological restoration through landscape scale partnerships in the Park	Facilitation of Dee resilience plan and Cairngorms Connect grant supporting landscape scale ecological restoration.	30,000					
	Facilitate landscape scale partnerships	Supporting the Angus Glens and Deeside partnerships i.e. workshops	6,000					



Corporate plan			Financial requirements				Staff resource	
Aim	Park Authority delivery	Thumbnail sketch	Resource	Capital	NRF	C2030	Operational plan	C2030
A12	Cairngorms Nature Index							
	Design, deliver and showcase a Cairngorms Nature Index	Finalise CNI for all 6 ecosystems (data, modelling, analysis and engagement). Production of interactive web portal.	30,000				1.0	
A13	Species recovery							
	Lead on beaver reintroduction.	Catchment assessment, survey; monitoring; management and mitigation plan; comms and engagement;	63,000				3.6	
	Lead on a capercaillie emergency plan and long - term strategy.	Legacy & future project facilitation	9,000					
	Lead on the Cairngorms raptor project.	Survey and monitoring; raptor modelling, tagging, research & engagement	43,000					
	Freshwater pearl mussel	Emergency plan, survey and reinforcement of Spey catchment. In catchment translocation Autumn 2024.			40,000			
	Conservation and land management engagement Species recovery partner project support	Supporting Cairngorms Nature Action Plan partnership projects- RIC, Rare Plants x 2, Saving Wildcats, Bees, SFFW, Wader Monitoring post.	8,000		60,000			
	Comms and engagement	Land management and Cairngorms Nature engagement, showcasing conservation and land management activities across the Park.	8,000					
		Lead oversight of delivery of Cairngorms Nature Action Plan. Production of new Cairngorms nature Action for 2025 -2030	5,000					



Corporate plan			Financial requirements				Staff resource	
Aim	Park Authority delivery	Thumbnail sketch	Resource	Capital	NRF	C2030	Operational plan	C2030
A14	Green investment							
	Pilot approaches to blended public and private finance to deliver net zero and biodiversity targets, whilst also providing long-term benefits for land managers, investors and local communities.	Continue with the Delnadamph pilot peatland restoration project in partnership with Canup Ltd and Palladium and learn lessons from it. Continue to monitor developments in this field through liaison with SG, SLE, WES and others.					0.2	
	Cairngorms 2030 6 Green finance and community wealth building					10,000		
B1	Working-age population							
	Deliver and monitor Local Development Plan 2021	Deliver and monitor Local Development Plan 2021	LDP costs under Place (C1)					
	Lead development of new Local Development Plan	Building the evidence base for the next LDP and starting early engagement with partners and the public on the evidence.						
	Lead the coordination and development of Cairngorms Youth Action Team		Cairngorms Youth Action Team supported via CLLD funding					
B2	Wellbeing economy							
	Lead the development of Cornerstone Indicators	Cornerstone indicators used to monitor NPPP and Wellbeing Economy Action Plan.					0.4	
	Lead development of Wellbeing Economy Action Plan to integrate economic and community-led development	Wellbeing Economy Action plan to be approved by CNPA Board in 2024.						
	Cairngorms 2030 7 Wellbeing economy					5,400		



Corporate plan			Financial requirements				Staff resource	
Aim	Park Authority delivery	Thumbnail sketch	Resource	Capital	NRF	C2030	Operational plan	C2030
B3	Real Living Wage							
	Promote the development of Real Living Wages through Economic Steering Group as part of Wellbeing Economy Action Plan	Information sharing and promotion of real living wage benefits and value to businesses and economy.					0.1	
B4	Skills and training							
	Develop CNPA as exemplar of good practice in youth training and skills – emphasis on Planning Service, Peatland, Ranger Service and Outdoor Access and Corporate functions	Junior Ranger programme used to generate interest in countryside careers. Four seasonal trainee ranger posts offered each summer.					0.2	
	Financially support targeted skills initiatives, mentoring schemes and collaborative business organisations (e.g. Growbiz, Countryside Learning Scotland, Cairngorms Business Partnership)	Grants to community-focused organisations, including Growbiz, Cairngorms Business Partnership and Countryside Learning Scotland. Organisation of a targeted countryside skills training and employment event in Aviemore in September 2024.	90,000					
B5	Community assets and land							
	Coordinate and promote the development of Local Action Plans/ Local Place Plans	Programme of refreshing Local Action Plans underway and incorporating a clearer spatial framework to help inform the planning process.					0.2	0.1
B6	New approaches to citizen participation							
	Cairngorms 2030 15 community managed grant scheme 11 effective community engagement					120,400	0.4	4.0



Corporate plan			Financial requirements				Staff resource	
Aim	Park Authority delivery	Thumbnail sketch	Resource	Capital	NRF	C2030	Operational plan	C2030
B7	Community-led planning and development							
	Coordinate and promote the development of Local Action Plans/ Local Place Plans	Support for VABS, Marr Area Partnership etc and the delivery of local action plans	100,000				0.6	0.5
	Act as accountable body or other supporting role as required to underpin delivery of CLLD in Cairngorms.	Deliver CLLD funding in the Cairngorms National Park					1.8	1.2
	Cairngorms 2030 12 Climate learning and education					9,000		
B8	Gaelic language and culture							
	Develop the Gaelic Language Plan for CNPA	Draft GLP out to public consultation from 25 Jan to 7 Mar. 322 responses to date. Final draft going to board in June, before being signed off by Bord na Gaidhlig.					0.1	
	Promote Gaelic especially through work on sustainable tourism, community development and relevant heritage projects	Gaelic foreword created for new Sustainable Tourism Action Plan and other corporate docs. Gaelic elements build into all new interpretation and publication projects, including new Beaver Trail at Rothiemurchus.	5,000					
B9	Mental and physical health							
	Lead development and delivery of Active Cairngorms Action Plan	Supporting volunteer led Health Walks programme through training, advice and developing new Health Walk groups.					0.2	1.0



Corporate plan			Financial requirements				Staff resource	
Aim	Park Authority delivery	Thumbnail sketch	Resource	Capital	NRF	C2030	Operational plan	C2030
	Deliver Cairngorms 2030 projects Cairngorms 2030 8 Public health & the outdoors 9 Outdoor dementia resource centre	Green Health link workers liaison with NHS/ GP practices to offer green health opportunities/ nature prescriptions	7,500			118,534		
B10	A Park for All							
	Lead on developing delivering new Active Cairngorms Action Plan	Support for Youth Action Team and their activities (includes Youth LAG/ funding programme). Junior Ranger programme. Engagement activity including in schools through Countryside Rangers. Work with third sector partners to offer volunteer opportunities for disadvantaged groups.	37,500				0.2 +Ranger time (C9)	
	Deliver the Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan and Sustainable Tourism Action Plan.	Infrastructure Plan updated early 2024. Direct capital investment and grant aid to partners to deliver improved/ more accessible path network - see C9						
	Develop Equalities Mainstreaming Report and Plan	Develop a new set of outcomes for the next 4-year period, 2025 - 2028.						
	Refresh and promote Park for All campaign	Activity continuing for 24/25 through B9, B11, C5 & C8. Campaign refresh to follow.						
	Lead coordination of Equalities Advisory Panel	Work by the EAP's 18 members will continue, with monthly meetings and ongoing advice on developing our projects, plans and strategies.						
B11	Volunteering and outdoor learning							
	Lead on delivering new Active Cairngorms Action Plan						1.8	



Corporate plan			Financial requirements				Staff resource	
Aim	Park Authority delivery	Thumbnail sketch	Resource	Capital	NRF	C2030	Operational plan	C2030
	Lead on recruitment/ training/ coordination of volunteers to care for Park	Recruitment and resourcing of volunteers and subsequent training. Operation of a volunteering portal to match volunteers with organisations/ land managers offering volunteer opportunities . Support for school activities via Countryside Ranger Service	50,000					
C1	Access to housing							
	Deliver and monitor Local Development Plan 2021	Deliver and monitor Local Development Plan 2021					4	
	Lead development of new LDP	Building the evidence base for the next LDP and starting early engagement with partners and the public on the evidence.	20,000					
	Support community-led housing network	Bringing community housing projects together to share knowledge and experience.						
C2	New housing							
	Deliver and monitor Local Development Plan 2021	Deliver and monitor Local Development Plan 2021					4	
	Lead development of new LDP	Building the evidence base for the next LDP and starting early engagement with partners and the public on the evidence.						
	Coordinate community-led housing network	Bringing community housing projects together to share knowledge and experience.						
C3	Housing and community benefit							
	Promote Review through Wellbeing Economy Action Plan						3.1	



Corporate plan			Financial requirements				Staff resource	
Aim	Park Authority delivery	Thumbnail sketch	Resource	Capital	NRF	C2030	Operational plan	C2030
	Lead development of new LDP	Building the evidence base for the next LDP and starting early engagement with partners and the public on the evidence.						
C4	Village and town centres							
	Promote Review through Wellbeing Economy Action Plan						0.4	
	Lead development of new LDP	Building the evidence base for the next LDP and starting early engagement with partners and the public on the evidence.						
C5	Visitors to the National Park							
	Deliver Sustainable Tourism Action Plan and Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan.	Infrastructure Plan now updated. Infrastructure investment supported through grants programme.	20,000				0.6	
	Lead the development of Active Cairngorms Action Plan							
	Undertake visitor surveys and collate and share visitor data	Visitor Survey to be delivered	20,000					
C6	A sustainable destination							
	Deliver Sustainable Tourism Action Plan and Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan.	Infrastructure Plan activity under C9. Advice provided to partners and communities to support their projects.					0.2	
	Cairngorms 2030 13 Climate conscious communities					9,000		
C7	Transport to and around the Park							
	Deliver Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan.	Most transport delivery via C2030						5.0



Corporate plan			Financial requirements				Staff resource	
Aim	Park Authority delivery	Thumbnail sketch	Resource	Capital	NRF	C2030	Operational plan	C2030
	Cairngorms 2030 17 Cycle friendly Cairngorms 18 Active communities 19 Sustainable travel 20 Changing travel behaviours					562,640		
C8	Accessible path and cycle network							
	Speyside Way, community paths and upland path maintenance	Investment in path upgrades and ongoing maintenance of elements of path network for which CNPA is responsible	100,000	40,000			1.0	
C9	High quality visitor experience							
	Deliver Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan	Direct investment in some path/ active travel improvements. Grant aid to partners to deliver new or improved infrastructure		400,000			16.5	
	Develop and deliver Active Cairngorms Action Plan.	Undertaking of statutory access duties. Includes promotion of responsible behaviour	15,000					
	Coordinate family of Ranger Services	Management of CNPA ranger service and support/ advice/ training to partner ranger services. Grant aid to partner ranger services	235,000					
C10	Cultural heritage							
	Support development of Cairngorms Cultural Heritage network	Look at potential for developing a cultural heritage network in the park building on survey work undertaken to date.	10,000				0.1	0.5
	Cairngorms 2030 14 Communities arts and culture					15,440		
	Cairngorms 2030 10 Landscape and communities					28,800		



Corporate plan			Financial requirements				Staff resource	
Aim	Park Authority delivery	Thumbnail sketch	Resource	Capital	NRF	C2030	Operational plan	C2030
Communications objectives								
	Communications	Ongoing communications management: publications & interpretation, stakeholder engagement, social media, website etc. Continuing redevelopment of website	165,500	60,000			6.14	1.0
Corporate objectives								
	Planning service improvements	Consistent improvement to planning services and operations.	30,000				39.97	4.8
	Facilities capital projects	Groundworks (Grantown) Back-up heating system (Grantown) Improvements - fixtures/ fittings (Ballater) Ongoing furniture replacement		90,000				
	HR initiatives	Culture and values training throughout the organisation. Equalities panel team building.	20,000					
	Information technology	Ongoing replacement of kit New finance system	20,000	45,000				
	Information management	Business Continuity Plan C2030 Research and knowledge exchange	25,000			73,400		
	Community managed grants	CLLD grant awards	150,000	93,000				
	Procurement support	Shared Services fees	45,000					



Corporate plan			Financial requirements				Staff resource	
Aim	Park Authority delivery	Thumbnail sketch	Resource	Capital	NRF	C2030	Operational plan	C2030
	Shared services LL&TNPA	Ongoing shared services agreement	117,000					
	C2030 programme contribution	Agreed annual contribution		450,000				



Appendix 4

Risk reference	Risk description	Budget response	Budget allocation £'000
1	Public sector finances constrain capacity to allocate sufficient resources to deliver corporate plan.	Funding allocations included in the budget are based on best information from Scottish Government. Budget development effected within this funding envelope.	13,300
2	Risk of C2030 match funding not being secured - current match funding in bid not fully committed and/ or for one year only in many areas. Particular risk to SG funding for peatland restoration; allocation for 2024/25 currently under review.	Budget includes Park Authority's agreed contribution. Work continues to secure funding not yet committed and to collect in committed sums. Conversation with Scottish Government has been positive, leading to verbal confirmation of funding for 2024/25 (included in £13,300 noted against risk 1).	450 3,580
3	Lack of expertise and experience in managing construction projects may compromise the effectiveness and efficiency of planned delivery. There are perceived gaps in our skill set with respect to: procurement processes, recruitment of technical staff, ability to undertake necessary due diligence on output from consultants and contractors. There are also financial risks associated with the letting of contracts where partnership funding is likely to be dependent on the achievement of satisfactory standards.	Budget allocation made for support from Central Government Procurement Shared Services (CGPSS). Positive discussion has resulted in verbal agreement and consideration of the form this support will take.	45
4	The Authority's ability to achieve corporate plan objectives depends on the formation and management of strategic partnerships.	Full budget allocation to the 24/25 operational plan is relevant to the development and strengthening of strategic partnerships through: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing work on NPPP• C2030 project• Communications	



Risk reference	Risk description	Budget response	Budget allocation £'000
5	Increasingly competitive and restricted recruitment climate prevents staff with the required experience and skill sets being secured. Planning and other specialist staff (IT, procurement, finance) requirements impacted by national labour/ skills shortages and/ or salary structures not sufficiently competitive to attract or retain key staff.	Payroll modelling includes provision for recruitment to vacancies, including to the planning and finance teams.	159
6	Supporting speed of organisational change prevents required development and embedding of effective support systems. The speed / scale of operational demand for support from corporate systems is such that we are always firefighting and giving the best advice and support we can. However, that ongoing fire-fighting and immediate advice prevents us having sufficient time to design, develop and implement new systems to better suit the new organisation.	Budget includes allocation for the procurement of a new finance system. Ongoing work by Information Manager is improving staff use of Microsoft applications. Training budget is allocated to support organisational development needs.	45 72
7	Scottish Government Main Group award 2023/25 creates significant financial pressure on the Park Authority's resource budget for 2024/25, with the potential to affect positive relationships with the Union, staff morale and motivation, recruitment and retention.	Payroll modelling indicates size of award provided in the budget.	333
8	Our Corporate and Operational Planning systems do not adapt to delivery of major funded programmes alongside delivering 'core' national park objectives. This leads to workforce stretch between 3rd party funding delivery and 'core' corporate plan activities with increased risks of stress and reduced morale.	Project and core resources - both financial and staff resources - have been considered alongside one another in developing the budget. (Appendix 3)	



Risk reference	Risk description	Budget response	Budget allocation £'000
9	<p>CNPA IT services are not sufficiently robust/ secure/ or well enough specified to support effective and efficient service delivery. Increasing demand for knowledge around Microsoft 365 and cyber security is outstripping the team's knowledge/ skill set.</p> <p>Increasing ICT dependency for effective and efficient operations is not adequately backed up by ICT systems support.</p> <p>Use of AI increases risk of cyber security threats such as spear-phishing.</p>	<p>Budget allocation maintains status quo, including support through shared services agreement with Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority.</p> <p>Provision made for cost of Cybersecurity+ accreditation.</p>	195
10	<p>Business Continuity Plans (BCP) are inadequate to deal with significant impacts to normal working arrangements and result in service failure.</p>	<p>Budget allocation made for consultancy to assist with development of BCP</p>	25
11	<p>Unrealistic expectations of what the Park Authority and its partners can achieve in the face of the significant risks presented by climate change, species extinction, flood management and fire, could result in reputational damage.</p>	<p>Communications budget (including website redevelopment).</p> <p>Includes provision for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• stakeholder engagement• media & PR• social media etc.	225