



Minutes of the Performance Committee

Held at Cairngorms National Park Authority office, Grantown on Spey

Hybrid

13 December 2024 at 1.00pm

Present in person

Kenny Deans (Convener)

Sandy Bremner

John Kirk

Eleanor Mackintosh

Chris Beattie

Russell Jones (sub for John Kirk)

Steve Micklewright

Present virtually

Ann Ross

In Attendance

Grant Moir, CEO

David Cameron, Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Services

Andy Ford, Director of Nature and Climate Change

Sarah Henshall, Head of Conservation

Colin Simpson, Head of Visitor Services and Active Travel

David Clyne, Head of Cairngorms 2030

Mariaan Pita, Executive Support Manager

Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board

Apologies

None.

Welcome and introduction

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Performance Committee.



Minutes of Previous Meetings

2. The minutes of the previous meeting, 20 September 2024 were approved with no amendments.

ACTION	Status
Action points arising from previous meetings	
14 June 2024	
11 February 2022 ii. Item 3.13a1 an accurate record of Visit Scotland funding 2023 / 24 will be brought to the Performance Committee in due course as external auditors are still working through records.	Closed Update below
VisitScotland through Rural Transport Infrastructure Funding which had been carried in deferred income deployed in 23/24 to: Glenmore toilet refurbishment £35,000 Path survey work £12,339 Other projects £6,371	
Action points arising from this meeting	
20 September 2024	
Cairngorms Peatland ACTION Programme (Paper 2) At para 13c i. Updated on carbon credit work undertaken within the sector between academic institutions and landowners.	Closed Update below
Oxford University have bought an estate outside the National Park with an objective to offset carbon through peatland restoration projects and other land management approaches. St Andrews University have entered into a long-term financial agreement with Corrour Estate where some of the costs of running the estate will be	



paid by the University in exchange for carbon credits. Another university is in discussion with a west coast estate to develop a similar partnership.

Matters Arising

3. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services and Deputy CEO advised that the Cairngorms Trust received a further £160k allocation for community led development that needs to be spent by end March 2025. He reported that the team were working hard towards awarding that to projects that will spend by the deadline.

Declarations of interest

4. None

Cairngorms 2030 programme update quarter 3 2024 (July – September) (Paper 1)

5. David Clyne, Head of Cairngorms 2030 introduced the paper which presents the status of programme management, including risk management status, based on information in project reports for the period from July to September 2024, updated where appropriate to reflect current position as at the time of writing, and the planned work to end December 2024.
6. The Performance Committee discussed the update and made the following comments and observations:
 - a) The Convener thanked the Head of Cairngorms 2030 for the report which highlights how much work had been carried out and echoed the thanks to the various teams who made it happen. He commented that it was positive that the progress had not only been noted by the National Lottery but also by other associated partners such as the NHS.
 - b) A request was made to see the film that was made in Whitby that featured the Board Convener.
 - c) The Convener reported that he had been interviewed by the internal auditor Azets and they had commended this Committee's approach of teasing out one of the elements at a time and taking a deeper dive into these. Director of Corporate Services and Deputy CEO advised that he had had sight of the first draft of that report which does highlight that Board members were interviewed as part of



collation of evidence. He advised that it was recognised within the report that the Board Committees have been evolving their reporting structures and are becoming more forward looking. He added that once it had been finalised it would go to Audit and Risk Committee for discussion then to this Committee for information.

- d) Would nature recovery be added to the Strategic Risk Register and the uncertainty of landowners engaging in community benefits? Head of Cairngorms 2030, provided a background and explained that in the development phase they had worked with 3 deer management groups to create strategic land use management plans which were now in place. The next stage was to work through what those options could be for individual estates within those groupings and how those options would best fit with the aims and ambitions of Cairngorms 2030. A number of draft options were on the table and there was work going through an assessment of those, identifying the nature objectives and how the people aspect can be integrated into that to enable people and nature to thrive together.
- e) Head of Cairngorms 2030 added that there was £1.5million funding available and if that was not allocated the first time round then it would be opened up in phase two to the wider land management estate community across the National Park and applications would be invited next summer (2025).

7. The Committee noted the paper and agreed to the recommendations:

- a) Programme risk level remains at amber due to the delay in receiving Sustrans Places for Everyone design funding. The delivery risk will likely remain at this level until end March 2025.
- b) A revised programme cash flow forecast has been prepared, which is showing a temporary £1.2m income shortfall. This shortfall will be resolved in the next financial year when transport funding is expected to be reinstated.
- c) A £600,000 funding application to Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) is proceeding with the Initial Strategic Assessment approved by HIE on 11 November 2024. The formal application and due diligence process has commenced.
- d) Azets Ltd have undertaken an internal governance and risk reporting audit of the Cairngorms 2030 programme. The performance committee Chair was interviewed as part of that process and the findings will be reported to Audit and Risk Committee and covered subsequently at Performance Committee.

8. Action Point Arising:



- i. **Heritage Lottery Fund film, filmed in Whitby to be circulated to the Board when available.**
- ii. **Azets report when finalised to be brought to a future meeting of the performance committee for information.**

Cairngorms 2030 transport theme overview (Paper 2)

9. Colin Simpson, Head of Visitor Services and Active Travel introduced the paper which presents a wide range of work on transport within the C2030 programme to the Performance Committee. The paper consequently covers a large volume of information. A briefing note was prepared for Committee members to highlight the key areas for consideration, including presenting some information on the Transport Theme in advance of the presentation to the meeting.
10. The Performance Committee discussed the update and made the following comments and observations:
 - a) With regards to buses on the Deeside corridor, a plea made to approach Stagecoach to ask them to ensure they have reliable buses and look to adapt their buses to make them cycle friendly.
 - b) A board member commented that the drivers of the buses in Badenoch and Strathspey do not have many working hours because of the limited timetable. Suggestion made to influence the bus providers. Reliability of buses was flagged as a major issue. Head of Visitor Services and Active Travel advised that real time signs being explored will hopefully provide increased confidence to users.
 - c) A member reported that the bus stop at the Co-op in Newtownmore stands back from the street and the bus did not stop when he had waited for it. Head of Visitor Services and Active Travel noted this and advised he would ensure that it was considered as part of the project and / or referred to the formal transport authority.
 - d) The Board Convener advised that he was aware of the funding challenges at Sustrans and provided the Committee with the assurance that he had stressed this to the cabinet secretary and pressed for more funding to be awarded for the delivery phase. He added that the transport secretary had provided confirmation this would be looked at.
 - e) A member commented that the Stagecoach app was really good and highlighted the need for more bike spaces on trains.
 - f) Were there any plans in Newtonmore where you come out of the Highland Folk Museum? Head of Visitor Services and Active Travel advised that it was not a project that was specifically flagged in the bid. There are bits around the projects



that are within the application that we can still pick up and work with partners on, so Head of Visitor Services and Active Travel provided assurance that this would be looked into.

- g) Recognition that BMW were funding electric charging points in National Parks car parks. As the Cairngorms National Park Authority do not own car parks was there any potential for elsewhere? Head of Visitor Services and Active Travel confirmed that there was potential for some electric charging points namely at Glenmore, Carr-Bridge at Landmark, Nethy-Bridge and Crathie
- h) Suggestion made to contact Tomintoul bowling club to fit electrical vehicle charging point in their car park.
- i) Comment made that it would be good to see electric buses running instead of double decker buses. Head of Visitor Services and Active Travel advised that reason for their use was for the school run contract a 53-seater is required. CEO added that discussions with the Highland Council were taking place around buses in the Glenmore corridor.
- j) Clarification sought into the meaning of non-motorised user route. Head of Visitor Services and Active Travel clarified that it was not just for walking and cycling on but also for horse riding, wheelchair and push chair use.

11. The Committee noted the paper and agreed to the recommendation:

- a) Note the progress towards delivery of the transport projects in the Cairngorms 2030 programme.

12. Action Points Arising:

- i. **Unreliability of buses and provision of cycle friendly buses to be raised with bus providers as part of the project.**

Bringing beavers back project (Paper 3)

13. Sarah Henshall, Head of Conservation introduced the paper which presents the latest delivery updates June - November 2024 on the Bringing back beaver's project.

14. The Performance Committee discussed the update and made the following comments and observations:

- b) A member queried the fact that the flood bank survey had been completed in collaboration with one local farmer while she thought the survey was with all the land managers. Head of Conservation clarified that an individual from the local farming community, as a farming representative, had assisted with the survey, acting as an advisor helping source land ownership information and arranging



access. The survey was completed in collaboration with landowners throughout the survey area. Head of Conservation added that the draft report flood bank report produced by CBEC will be shared with landowners in the new year.

- c) A member asked to be provided with information to support conversations at local community council meetings. Head of Conservation advised that the monthly updates provided to members of the beaver management and mitigation group can be forwarded onto the members requesting them.
- d) Members discussed the long-term plan for the beavers including species monitoring and monitoring of condition of the flood banks.
- e) Members discussed the tourism surrounding the beavers and acknowledged that local companies are offering activities such as visits to beaver sites and selling beaver merchandise.

John Kirk left the meeting at 14.10

15. The Committee noted the paper and agreed to the recommendations:

- a) Progress towards the project's objectives was noted.
- b) There were no strategically significant impacts on delivery of the Cairngorm National Park Authority's Corporate Plan, National Park Partnership Plan or strategic risk register to be escalated.

16. Action Point Arising:

- ii. **Head of Conservation to share monthly updates provided to Beaver Management and Mitigation group with the Board Members requesting information.**

Cairngorms Nature Action Plan (Paper 4)

17. Sarah Henshall, Head of Conservation introduced the paper which presents an outline timetable for the development of the 2025 – 2030 Action Plan.

18. The Performance Committee discussed the update and made the following comments and observations:

- a) Members had a discussion around target setting for species focused action: did the approach accurately reflect the external factors responsible for population dynamics and whether the meaning of this element of the plan was adequately clear.

19. The Committee noted the paper and agreed to the recommendations:



- a) Noted achievements and lessons learnt from delivery of the Cairngorms Nature Action Plan 2019 - 2024
- b) Noted timeline and milestones for development of Cairngorms Nature Action Plan 2025 - 2030

20. Action Point Arising: None.

Committee Annual Report (Paper 5)

21. Mariaan Pita, Executive Support Manager / David Cameron, Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Services introduced the paper which presents the Annual Report of the Performance Committee to members.

22. The Committee agreed the paper.

23. Action Point Arising: None.

AOCB

24. Director of Corporate Services and Deputy CEO reminded the Committee of the forward look of items coming over the course of next year and invited thoughts on that.

25. The Committee discussed this, and a suggestion was made to have a paper on Youth action in the summertime. Director of Corporate Services agreed and said it would complement a Community Local Led development update and both could be brought to the Committee to their September 2025 meeting. A suggestion was made to incorporate the Ranger service into reporting on the Active Cairngorms action plan,

26. Action Points Arising:

- i. Paper on youth action to complement a paper on community local led development to be scheduled for September 2025.**
- ii. Ranger service update to be incorporated into the Active Cairngorms action plan paper.**

27. Date of next meeting 14 March 2025

28. The meeting closed at 14.21.



Performance Committee Action Points:

ACTION	Status
Action points arising from this meeting	
13 December 2024	
Cairngorms 2030 programme update quarter 3 2024 (July – September) (Paper 1) At para 8 i. Heritage Lottery Fund film, filmed in Whitby to be circulated to the Board when available. ii. Azets report when finalised to be brought to a future meeting of the performance committee for information.	Closed - distributed Open
Cairngorms 2030 transport theme overview (Paper 2) At para 12 i. Unreliability of buses and provision of cycle friendly buses to be raised with bus providers as part of the project.	
Bringing beavers back project (Paper 3) At para 16 ii. Head of Conservation to share monthly updates provided to landowners with Board Members at their request.	
AOCB At para 26 i. Paper on youth action to complement a paper on community local led development to be scheduled for September 2025.	



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| ii. Ranger service update to be incorporated into the Active Cairngorms action plan paper. | |
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