



Approved Minutes of the Performance Committee meeting

Held online

14 March 2025 at 01.30pm

Present online

Kenny Deans (Chair)

Steve Micklewright (Deputy Chair)

Sandy Bremner

Eleanor Mackintosh

Chris Beattie

John Kirk

Ann Ross

In attendance

Grant Moir, Chief Executive Officer

David Cameron, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Director of Corporate Services

Andy Ford, Director of Nature and Climate Change

Gavin Miles, Director of Planning and Place

Colin McClean Head of Land Management

David Clyne, Head of Cairngorms 2030

Alan Smith, Outdoor Learning and Engagement Manager

Karen Johnstone, Clerk to the Board

Apologies

None

Welcome and introduction

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



Approval of minutes of previous meetings

2. The draft minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 December 2024 were approved with the requests of the amendment to change the reference to the bus stop to Newtonmore, not Kingussie at 10c.

Matters arising not covered elsewhere

3. There were not matters arising.

ACTION	Status
Action points arising from previous meeting	
13 December 2024	
Cairngorms 2030 programme update quarter 3 2024 (July – September) (Paper 1) At para 8 i. Azets report when finalised to be brought to a future meeting of the performance committee for information.	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.	Closed
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.	Closed
AOCB At para 26 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.	Closed – covered March 25 Open



Declarations of interest

4. There were no declarations of interest.

01.36pm John Kirk joined the meeting

Cairngorms Trust and Community Led Local Development Update (Paper 6)

5. David Cameron, Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Services introduced the paper which presents an update on the work of the Cairngorms Local Action Group Trust ('the Cairngorms Trust') and the collective work of the Cairngorms Trust and the Park Authority in Community Led Local Development (CLLD) activity.
6. The Performance Committee discussed the paper and made the following comments and observations:
 - a) A board member sought clarity on the CLLD budgets. Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Services stated that CLLD was previously covered by LEADER programmes until 2022, and Scottish Government (SG) continue to provide budget across annualised allocations. It was noted that SG have different criteria to meet each year and there are one-year allocations which will be primarily of capital nature.
 - b) Board Members expressed their disappointment that funding from SG would be purely capital for 2025/26, noting that projects are looking for more than just capital. Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Operations agreed this was limiting, noting these comments have been shared with SG officials.
 - c) Discussions were had around lead in times and how these will be affected for capital funding for Trust and community projects, questioning if lead in times can be started earlier. Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Operations clarified that the Park Authority and the Trust have started to advertise that funds will be available a month ago, noting there are promotions on both websites for expressions of interest, and to encourage people to come forward with ideas, therefore allowing work with communities to start developing those ideas. Lead time starts in February instead of March / April to allow applicants more time.
 - d) Chris Beattie offered to put Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Operations in contact with officers from Angus Councils, to offer support with voluntary



giving. Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Operations agreed this would be helpful suggesting they could attend working group meetings or discussions.

7. The Performance Committee noted the paper and agreed to the recommendations:
 - a) Whether the programmes of activity are making the expected contribution to the Cairngorms National Park Authority's agreed strategic outcomes.
 - b) Whether the delivery updates suggest any strategically significant impacts on the Cairngorms National Park Authority's agreed performance objectives.
 - c) Whether any material impacts on the Cairngorms National Park Authority's strategic risk management and mitigation measures arise from assessment of programme delivery.
8. Action Points Arising: None

Cairngorms National Park venison subsidy scheme 2024/25 (Paper 1)

9. Colin McClean, Head of Land Management introduced the paper which presents an update on the delivery of the Park Authority's venison subsidy scheme.
10. The Performance Committee discussed the paper and made the following comments and observations:
 - a) CEO gave further context around deer, noting that Cairngorms National Park has had a higher take up than other trial areas however, this is a learning experience, and the Park Authority will share learning with other areas as looking to year two of the schemes. It was noted that projects such as this can take two or three years for results to filter through therefore this will be re-evaluated again in the future, making the necessary tweaks to make it better, even though it is proving promising. Board Members agreed and were happy that changes are able to be made to allow more success, encouraging more land managers to come onboard.
 - b) A board member requested an update on the deer larders in Highland Perthshire regarding how this began and where the funding was sourced from. Head of Land Management explained it began with a consultation with landowners experiencing agricultural damage and large amounts of deer but unable to cull due to no larder facilities, therefore the idea of community larders was introduced. The programme is funded by Cairngorms 2030 with



National Lottery Heritage Funding (NLHF). It was noted that a portion of the cull goes to foodbanks, from Blairgowrie to Edinburgh and other portion goes to school dinner programmes in Perth and Kinross, Strathspey, Speyside, Aberdeenshire and Angus, and Highland Council are now interested to be involved as well. There has been a lot of positive media responses from this project so far.

11. The Performance Committee noted the paper and agreed to the recommendations:
 - a) Note the progress of the venison subsidy scheme.
12. Action Points Arising: None

Cairngorms 2030 programme update, quarter four 2024 (October – December) (Paper 2)

13. David Clyne, Head of Cairngorms 2030 introduced the paper which presents the status of programme and risk management, based on information in project reports for the period from October to December 2024, and updated where appropriate to reflect current position as at the time of writing, and the planned work to end March 2025.
14. The Performance Committee discussed the paper and made the following comments and observations:
 - a) A board member asked for future reports to answer the questions of what change is happening and what difference is this making to people's lives. Head of Cairngorms 2030 (C2030) noted the paper already includes details of delivery impact (such as the deer larder project) and that the five-year monitoring and evaluation, will track and report on overall programme impact. The reports will be shared with the Performance Committee on annual basis.
 - b) Clarity was sought regarding training volunteers and how this works. Outdoor Learning and Engagement Manager noted that the C2030 team works with volunteers to identify further volunteering opportunities and provide training required to allow them to carry out their project. An example was given for a key project currently underway; bike bus in Badenoch and Strathspey, volunteer training is available to provide riding skills and keeping children safe



on the roads. As new opportunities are available, these are shared with volunteers to help improve projects.

- c) A board member questioned what work is being carried out on the Spey and Dee through C2030. Director of Nature and Climate Change responded there are a number of projects involving the Spey and Dee; restoration of River Quoich, Braemar, River Dulain at Sluggan, and exploring further opportunities on the Esk.

- 15. The Performance Committee noted the paper and agreed to the recommendations:
 - a) Note progress to date and future plans for C2030 delivery
 - b) Note specific points of C2030 delivery risk
 - c) Highlight any issues arising that members may feel need specific consideration by staff from a strategic and board perspective.

- 16. Action Points Arising: None.

Cairngorms 2030: Health and Wellbeing (Paper 3)

- 17. Alan Smith, Outdoor Learning and Engagement Manager and David Clyne, Head of Cairngorms 2030 introduced the paper which presents an update on the progress made against the objectives of the Public Health and the Outdoors and Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre projects, part of the Health and Wellbeing Theme in the Cairngorms 2030 Programme.
- 18. The Performance Committee discussed the paper and made the following comments and observations:
 - a) A board member questioned the number of incomplete referrals. Outdoor Learning and Engagement Manager noted these were from people who either do not show up or respond. It showed the importance of more hours being vital, to allow staff more time to follow up and overcome these difficulties, while also judging the number of times to contact a person before marking is unresponsive. It was highlighted that all unresponsive people will be reported back to where their original referral comes from.
 - b) Discussions were had around how sustainable some of the C2030 projects would be in the long term and if they would be manageable for others to take on. Outdoor Learning and Engagement Manager noted this was a core part of



the National Park work, and the aim is to make them routine and manageable work for core staff throughout the National Park to continue.

- c) Discussions were had around the fact this was a fantastic initiative. However, questions were raised if this was up to the Park Authority to be responsible for. Outdoor Learning and Engagement Manager noted our responsibility was to use the NLHF funding to pioneer new projects that key partner organisations have wanted to trial, take onboard the Park Authority's results, findings and learnings and move forward, integrating this into their core services.
- d) Discussions were had around current budget limitations and if this is part of the Park Authority's core budget. CEO highlighted that over the next four years, funding does not come out of the Park Authority's core budget as it comes through the C2030 from the NLHF. It was noted the idea of C2030 was to trial new initiatives to see how they improve the National Park and to make it sustainable for organisations such as NHS to pick these up and roll them out to other areas in Scotland as well as the National Park.
- e) Head of Cairngorms 2030 noted that due to the pioneering work carried out in the National Park, a new outdoor dementia centre has opened up in Edinburgh.

19. The Performance Committee noted the paper and agreed to the recommendations:
- a) Note progress to date and future plans for C2030 delivery
 - b) Note specific points of C2030 delivery risk
 - c) Highlight any issues arising that members may feel need specific consideration by staff from a strategic and board perspective.

20. Action Points Arising: None.

Cairngorms Peatland ACTION Programme (Paper 4)

21. Colin McClean, Head of Land Management introduced the paper which updates on the delivery of the Park Authority's Peatland ACTION programme in 2024/25 and presents early-stage plans for the 2025/26 pipeline of activity.
22. The Performance Committee discussed the paper and made the following comments and observations:



- a) Discussions were had around the additional budget, Board Members agreed it was a good idea to use the additional money to plan for three to four years ahead. Questions were raised if there was scope to use the money towards training or recruitment for local contractors. Head of Land Management commented that the amount of contractors have now increased; a mix of local and larger civil firms. It was noted that there was a new entrant scheme this year. The increase in the peatland budget across Scotland will mean there is more work for contractors, and this may test contractor capacity in 2025/26.
- b) CEO highlighted that the Peatland team in the Cairngorms have a good national reputation, receiving good feedback from the Director of SG, as well as others. It was noted that over the next few years, the peatland work will become trickier as sites become remoter etc. The Park Authority cannot financially do all the work and must be realistic on what can be achieved. Board Members agreed the work carried out has been of a high quality by the Peatland team and praised their work.

23. The Performance Committee noted the paper and agreed to the recommendations:
- a) Note progress against programme targets for 2024/25
 - b) Note the plans for 2025/26

24. Action Points Arising: None.

Laggan Hydrology project update (Paper 5)

25. Andy Ford, Director of Nature and Climate Change introduced the paper which updates the Performance Committee on the delivery of the Laggan hydrology engagement event as a component of delivery of the Spey Catchment Management Plan. The paper is presented at the request of the Committee Chair, as an aspect of the board's role in scrutiny of project delivery where this may have wider impacts on strategic risk management and reputational damage.
26. The Performance Committee discussed the paper and made the following comments and observations:
- a) Discussions were had around the previous Laggan hydrology engagement event and an overview was shared to update Committee Members. It was explained that a report was commissioned and funded by the Park Authority



to gather the evidence to allow the Spey Catchment Initiative to deliver the Spey Catchment Management Plan and liaise with landowners on the results.

- b) Further discussions were had to understand the reasons behind why some land managers were disappointed with the report. It was discussed that this was due to a perceived lack of communication with landowners by the Spey Catchment Initiative and there not being sufficient oversight by the Park Authority's Senior Management Team ahead of the results being presented publicly.
- c) Director of Nature and Climate Change agreed these were valid points that have been reflected in the paper and going forward, following the recommendations in the paper, there will be a change at operational levels to ensure reports are being reviewed by Senior Management Teams before being issued.
- d) Discussions were had around previous reports that might be relevant to the overall work of the Spey Catchment Initiative. John Kirk offered to share the 1990 Cuthbert Highland report. Director of Nature and Climate Change offered to share this with the Spey Catchment Initiative.
- e) A Board Member questioned if there was any opportunity to clawback money from the authors of the report. Director of Nature and Climate Change explained that this would be unlikely due to the contract being finished and the report being signed off. It was noted that the Park Authority will make improvements to its process for the future.

27. The Performance Committee noted the paper and agreed to the recommendations:

- a) Note the update on the project
- b) Consider whether there are any significant risk implications arising from project delivery to date.

28. Action Points Arising: None

AOCB

29. None

Date of Next Meeting

30. The date of the next meeting is 13 June 2025 in person.



31. The meeting concluded at 02.58pm

ACTION	Status
Action points arising from previous meetings	
13 December 2024	
Cairngorms 2030 programme update quarter 3 2024 (July – September) (Paper 1) At para 8 i. Azets report when finalised to be brought to a future meeting of the performance committee for information.	Open
AOCB At para 26 i. Ranger service update to be incorporated into the Active Cairngorms action plan paper.	Open
Action points arising from today's meeting	
14 March 2025	
None	