



## Minutes of the Performance Committee

**Held online**

**20 September 2024**

### **Present**

Kenny Deans (Convener)

Sandy Bremner

Eleanor Mackintosh

Chris Beattie

Dr Hannah Grist (sub for Steve Micklewright)

Ann Ross

### **In Attendance**

Grant Moir, Chief Executive Officer

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

Gavin Miles, Director of Planning and Place

David Clyne, Head of Cairngorms 2030

Colin McClean, Head of Land Management

Eilidh Todd, Communities and Rural Development Manager

Karen Johnstone, Clerk to the Board

### **Apologies**

John Kirk

Steve Micklewright

### **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, 14 June 2024 were approved with no amendments.



## **Matters Arising**

ACTION	Status
<b>Draft Minutes – 14 June 2024</b>	
<b>Action points arising from previous meetings</b>	
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.	In hand  Update at next meeting
<b>Paper 2 - Cairngorms 2030: Q1 2024 (Jan – Mar)</b>	
At para 9c i. Chair of Performance Committee, Kenny Deans and Deputy CEO, David Cameron to discuss and make a plan for how best to share with the Board Members the forward look document to allow them to see what's coming up.	Completed.

3. Performance Committee meeting on 14 June 2024 - 9d - update on the active travel budget between Transport Scotland and Sustrans. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) stated this would be addressed under the Cairngorms 2030 update.

## **Declarations of interest**

4. Eleanor Mackintosh noted she sits on board of both the Cairngorms Trust and Cairngorms 2030 Programme Board, both of which are connected to reports presented to this meeting.

## **Cairngorms 2030: Quarter two 2024 (April – June) Programme update (Paper 1)**

5. David Clyne introduced the paper which presents an update to the Park Authority Performance Committee on the risks under management by the Cairngorms 2030 programme team. This paper presents the status of programme management, including risk management status, based on information in project reports for the period from March to June 2024, updated where appropriate to reflect current position as at the time of writing, and the planned work to end September 2024.



6. The Performance Committee discussed the update and made the following comments and observations:
- a) A board member raised concerns regarding if provisions have been made in the case that funding is withdrawn due to Scottish Government's (SG) current financial situation. Head of Cairngorms 2030 (C2030) reassured committee members that changes to Government funding will not impact on the Cairngorms 2030 budget from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. There are some issues specifically around the match funding associated with transport projects, but staff are having constructive discussions with Transport Scotland and Scottish Government.
  - b) CEO noted from the previous matters arising, that the Park Authority is in a reasonable place at the moment following recent discussions with Transport Scotland and sharing the Park Authority's proposed expenditure for 2025 / 26 and 2026 / 27 with them. CEO highlighted the Park Authority are confident they will receive funding for design work as they have strong construction match funding in place.
  - c) A board member questioned if there were any publicly sensitive projects that are not progressing at the moment. Head of C2030 noted there are a range of projects all at design stage now, however in Carrbridge they have some push back relating to active travel designs. The team are aware of the differing views, it was noted that the project is not going forward in the foreseeable future.
  - d) Clarity was sought regarding the Red Amber Green (RAG) rating of risk status. Head of C2030 noted that following a meeting with Transport Scotland and Sustrans, the red risk rating moved to amber to reflect improved expectations of funding being made available and continues to be at amber status as there is sufficient time to mitigate risk around delivery of these targets.
  - e) A board member questioned the scope of the infrastructure of the sustainable transport projects, specifically, if there would be places for public to park their bikes. Head of C2030 confirmed that there would be as this was a fundamental part of the cycle friendly and behaviour change projects, along with transport locations where there will be bike parks, charging stations. These project elements will all be connected in a strategic way.
7. The Committee noted the paper.



8. Action Point Arising: None

## **Verbal Update on Cairngorms 2030 Empowerment Theme**

9. Eilidh Todd, Communities and Rural Development Manager gave a presentation on Cairngorms 2030 Empowerment Theme.

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

- a) A board member questioned how the local communities' views were gauged without them having a community council to speak for them as a whole and highlighted that residents not engaged with the park are the most underrepresented groups. Communities and Rural Development Manager noted that using multiple channels of communication, innovative methods, listening to individuals, meeting people where they are based; allowing them to be as involved as they chose to be; and not forcing pressure or opinions on them are all mechanisms being deployed to engage with local residents.
- b) A board member questioned if the SG budget restrictions were having an impact on how they engage with the public. Head of C2030 noted that though they were not directly impacted, they have to act sensitively and appropriately given the current circumstances.
- c) A board member raised concern about the language used in the presentation and how this would help engage the public and suggested focusing more on quality conversations. CEO highlighted that there has been a lot of public engagement from recent events. These events and their follow up allow the public to share their feedback, thoughts and opinions with the team openly. The language used in the presentation is designed to explain the processes being deployed and would not be used publicly.
- d) There was a discussion about the regularity of community events, such as the recent events at Boat of Garten, the CEO confirmed they are hopeful to hold another event annually, if not more regularly.
- e) A board member questioned managing volunteer burn out. Communities and Rural Development Manager agreed that this was a concern, and the team are very aware of how much time and effort is involved for volunteers. Going forward the team plans to improve on building relationships and creating



positive memories with the public; having open and honest conversations, being action focused and delivering on meaningful objectives.

11. The Committee noted the verbal update.

12. Action points: None

### **Cairngorms Peatland ACTION Programme (Paper 2)**

13. Colin McLean introduced the paper which presents an update on the delivery of the Park Authority's Peatland ACTION programme in 2024 / 25 and consideration of plans for the 2025 / 26 pipeline of activity.

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

- a) CEO stated the Park Authority had attended a peatland conference in Aviemore with 400 people from across the UK where Jim Farlie confirmed £250 million of capital from SG over the next 10 years and the Programme for Government for 2025 / 26 confirms at least 10,000 hectares will be restored in Scotland per annum. Funding appears to be positive for next year, especially with the match funding, however noting that it is always beneficial to have private funding as well. It was also highlighted that there were three more peatland projects applications submitted before closing the programme for this year, taking the hectares restored over target, and significantly reducing the forecast underspend.
- b) A question was raised regarding the circumstances around losing a big project. Head of Land Management stated that this was due to a unique situation with complicated land ownership around the carbon credits, however noted that this is unlikely to have constraints on the programme going forward for others.
- c) The CEO noted ongoing partnership between academic institutions and other partners regarding long term agreements on carbon credits and will share the update with the committee when information is available. SG are currently carrying out work regarding tenant and landowners on forestry and peatland carbon credits and if there is some Information, this will be shared.

15. The Committee noted the paper.



**16. Action Point Arising:**

- i. Updated on carbon credit work being undertaken within the sector.

## **Cairngorms Trust and Community Led Local Development update (Paper 3)**

17. David Cameron 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.

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

- a) A discussion was had around the possibility of using levelling up funds, however Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Services noted that this was difficult for the Park Authority to access as it is allocated to local authorities and as the Park Authority sits in five different local authorities this would be a challenge to coordinate.
- b) Questions were raised if Cairngorms Trust have combined with similar organisations to lobby for a change in funding. Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Services assured the Committee that this work is already ongoing, however noting this is a slow process as it involves creating a new structure.
- c) Comments were made regarding the frustration around the slow decision-making process on awarding funds by government to the Trust, resulting in fears of job losses where community projects and their staffing were potentially dependent on these funding decisions.
- d) A board member questioned whether the three funding streams on offer were pro rata or if they were concentrating on alternative funds. Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Services stated that regarding Community Lead vision funds, some projects have already been funded, some are ready to go waiting on approval from SG. Nature funded streams are fully committed, allocating £90,000. There are still three strands of funding, but the community lead vision fund had to be paired down.

19. The Committee noted the paper.

20. Action Point Arising: None.



## AOCB

21. None

22. Date of next meeting 13 December, hybrid at the moment, but may get moved to online only.

23. The meeting closed at 11.27am

### Performance Committee Action Points:

ACTION	Status
<b>Action points arising from previous meetings</b>	
<b>14 June 2024</b>	
<b>Action points arising from previous meetings</b>	
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.	In hand  Update at next meeting
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	
<b>Action points arising from this meeting</b>	
<b>20 September 2024</b>	
Cairngorms Peatland ACTION Programme (Paper 2)  At para 13c 1 Updated on carbon credit work undertaken within the sector between academic institutions and landowners.	



## **Audit and Risk Committee Minutes**

**Held Online on 27 September 2024 at 12.30**

### **Present:**

Fiona McLean (Chair)

Peter Cosgrove (Deputy Chair)

Bill Lobban

Geva Blackett

Paul Gibb

Duncan Miller

### **In Attendance**

Grant Moir, Chief Executive Officer

David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services and Deputy CEO

Gavin Miles, Director of Planning and Place

Louise Allen, Head of Finance and Corporate Operations

Gregory Oduor, Mazars

Stephanie Hume, Azets

Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board

### **Apologies: None**

### **Welcome and introduction**

1. Fiona McLean, the Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **Approval of minutes of previous meeting**

2. The draft minutes of the meeting on the 21 June 2024 were approved with no amendments.

### **Matters arising not covered in agenda**

3. Updates on outstanding actions as summarised in the table at the end of this minute were noted.

### **Declarations of interest**

4. No interests declared.





## **2023/24 Final Accounts (Paper 1)**

5. Louise Allen, Head of Finance and Corporate Operations presented the paper which presents and seeks approval to the annual report and accounts for 2023/24 prior to their being submitted to Audit Scotland for final certification. Louise outlined the main sections of this report and presented the key results for the 2023/24 financial year.

*Grant Moir arrived at 12.56*

6. The Audit and Risk Committee discussed the report and made the following comments and observations:
  - a) The Chair praised the excellent results and well written report and expressed her gratitude to the Head of Finance and Corporate Operations and the wider team with special mention to Daniel Ralph, Finance Manager, for the amount of work done in bringing this document together.
  - b) With reference to the CEO's section in the foreword, the National Lottery Heritage fund should be written out in full and not just the first two words.
  - c) Resounding praise for the minimal overspend of £4k which was an excellent turnout and recognition that it was difficult to balance to the dot when dealing with such large sums of money.
  - d) With regards to the percentage of reduction in CO2 emissions by 2030 on page 50 a member noted that this differs to the comment on p64 on overall accountability report, could it be clarified which was the correct percentage? Director of Corporate Services and Deputy CEO confirmed that the correct figure was 59 tonnes so 60% reduction CO2 emissions by 2030.
  - e) Director of Corporate Services and Deputy CEO highlighted that there have not been any changes in accounting policies to bring to members' attention, nor does management think there have been any estimates that need highlighted to the Audit and Risk Committee.
  - f) The Chair asked if next year there would be different accounting requirements? Head of Finance and Corporate Operations confirmed there would be slight changes and the external auditor would relay these as they come up.
7. The Audit and Risk Committee approved the annual report and accounts prior to submission to Mazars and Audit Scotland for final certification subject to two amendments:
  - a) National Lottery Heritage Fund to be written out in full in the CEO's foreword.
  - b) Percentage of reduction in carbon emissions to be corrected so that the figures match throughout the document.



8. Action points arising: None.

### **External audit update (Paper 2)**

9. Gregory Oduor, the external auditor, Mazars presented the report on the audit of the annual report and accounts for 2023/24.
10. The Audit and Risk Committee discussed the report and made the following comments and observations:
- a) The Chair thanked the team for their great work and expressed satisfaction to receive the reassurance the external auditors provide.
  - b) The Chair queried where it said it was best value for the committee to self-assess their performance annually? Gregory Oduor, Mazars clarified this was referring to the National Park Authority and not the Audit and Risk committee.
  - c) Director of Corporate Services and Deputy CEO advised that they were not anticipating any delays, aiming to get the full accounts signed off by end of October. There is an internal deadline for audit firms to sign off accounts by 31 October and they were working to achieve that. He commented that they were ahead of timetable from last year. If anything of materiality arose he would alert the chair and deputy chair. He is not anticipating that or any delay in timetable to sign accounts. Tom Reid, Mazars has suggested for transparency to bring the final report following accounts sign off to the next meeting in November for information.
11. The Audit and Risk Committee:
- a) Considered the auditor's report and findings.
  - b) Considered the draft management representation letter provided within the report and approve it for signature by the Accountable Officer.

12. Action points arising: None.

### **External audit assurances (Paper 3)**

13. Gregory Oduor, Mazars presented the paper that presents the Request for information from Management and Those Charged with Governance prepared by Mazars.
14. The Audit and Risk Committee:
- a) Considered the auditor's request for information and Management's response to this.



- b) Provided assurance that its governance extends to cover the items on which assurance is requested.
- c) Agreed the information as set out in the draft response submitted as part of the committee's meeting papers

15. Action points arising:                      None.

## **Internal audit plan 2024/25: Operational and financial planning (Paper 4)**

16. Stephanie Hume, the Internal Auditor, Azets presented the paper that presents the review of the annual operational planning process at the Cairngorms National Park Authority, including how operational plans are developed alongside, and the extent to which they are integrated within, the annual financial plan. The review considered the cycle of spending and monitoring of spend throughout the year to achieve the operational plan, and the link to the delivery of corporate outcomes, including the use of scenario planning. Stephanie outlined the recommendations for improvement that had been made by the audit team, noting in this instance one of the recommendations had not been agreed by the management team.
17. Director of Corporate Services and Deputy CEO advised that he welcomed the work done and the report which they found very helpful. He explained that unusually there was disagreement on one of the recommendations. He saw quite an overlap in recommendations 2.1 and 3.1. He said 2.1 was a good proposal and agreed there is a need to do more at a governance level looking at key assumptions given the heavy reliance on external funding, and it would be more and more important to model where the organisation may be in future years. He explained that the reasoning behind not agreeing with the detail at 3.1 was it was considered impossible to adhere to the spirit of this recommendation without getting into detail of possible, specific budget changes and considered it was not legitimate to seek to consider those at a governance level under a confidential banner. He was aware of instances of the Information Commission instructing organisations to release that type of information, with the organisation then faced with a risk of reputational damage.
18. The Chair invited the Audit and Risk Committee to discuss the report and specifically management's reasoning for not agreeing with the detail in recommendation 3.1. They made the following comments and observations:
- a) Comment made that the management response was balanced and clear and was therefore happy to support the officer's recommendation.



- b) The Chair commented that she agreed on the sensitivity and reputational risk given public interest in our activities, which appeared much higher than many other boards she was aware of. She added that if the Committee agreed today to accept the management recommendation, this would seem reasonable given the balance of risk and public scrutiny implications of putting things out in public domain which could set hares racing.
- c) A member asked if it could be confirmed what the auditor's response to the rationale provided by management was? Stephanie Hume, Azets advised that she appreciated Director of Corporate Services rationale for the position taken. She advised that these things are seen as good practise however it was acceptable for an organisation not to accept all the recommendations so long as the Audit and Risk Committee were in agreement with that.
- d) Director of Corporate Services advised that they would ensure that balance is struck. Plans in place to have a budget discussion in December with the Board working towards budget paper going before the Board in March. He advised he felt the position between recommendations at 2.1 and 3.1 was actually quite nuanced and it may well be the case that once the audits had sight of the type of material planned for the board session in December, they would be more assured of the levels of information being presented and approach to scenario planning being taken.
- e) The Chair welcomed this proposal and invited the Director of Corporate Services and Azets to work together on this and to come back to the Committee with how they feel this is working in terms of Committee assurance.
- f) A member commented that the Board were really concerned about budget cuts and would support management working with Azets to find common agreement.
- g) The Chair added that if they could come to a compromise that everyone was reasonably content with, this could be revisited at the end of reporting year. Stephanie Hume agreed the Azets internal audit team would work with the staff team to review and report back on this matter.

19. The Audit and Risk Committee:

- a) Considered the internal auditors report and findings.
- b) Endorsed the management responses to recommendations for future action and improvements.

20. Action points arising:

- i. **Update on internal audit view on financial scenario planning to be provided to the Audit and Risk Committee at the end of the financial year.**



28. Action point arising: None.



32.Action points arising: None.



## **Procurement action plan (Paper 8)**

33. Louise Allen, Head of Finance and Corporate Operations presented an action plan towards improvement of the Park Authority's procurement processes, procedures and internal controls. It has been developed in response to the Internal Audit review of procurement carried out by Azets as part of the approved 2023 / 24 audit programme.
34. The Audit and Risk Committee discussed the report and made the following comments and observations:
- a) The Chair requested a further update on the work of the procurement officer is doing at the next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee in November.
  - b) A member highlighted that the main board were concerned with 'procurement issues' and when progress is made, it would be useful to highlight improvements made to the board now have a procurement officer in place. The CEO agreed to mention it in his next CEO report.
35. The Audit and Risk Committee reviewed progress made against each activity in the programme for improvement developed by management.
36. Action points arising:
- i. **Further update on progress made to be brought to next meeting.**
  - ii. **CEO to mention the impact the Procurement Officer is making in the organisation within his next CEO report for Board meeting on 22 November 2024.**

## **Procurement Strategy (Paper 9)**

37. David Cameron, Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Services presented the draft procurement strategy, developed following the review of procurement carried out by Internal Audit, as part of their programme of work for 2023/24, and in accordance with the recommendations made by the Auditor.
38. The Audit and Risk Committee discussed the report and made the following observation:
- a) The Chair queried why there was nothing on relevant staff who have procurement responsibilities having training, developing understanding, knowledge and training should it be included in the strategy? Director of Corporate Services and Deputy CEO advised that there was a section on the role of the Procurement officer and their role in training. However, he would ensure





there is something explicit in the strategy about the need for appropriate staff training.

39. The Audit and Risk Committee considered the procurement strategy and advised on its suitability as a basis for development of processes and procedures.

40. Action points arising:               None.

## **AOCB**

41. No items presented.

42. Motion to take the next item in confidential session.

43. The public business of the meeting concluded at 14.10 pm

44. The next meeting is on 8 November 2024.

Ref	Action Detail	Who	When	Status
24/11/23	Review accounts figure for consultancies (page 68)	Louise and David	Look when finalise the 23 / 24 accounts, highlight to the Committee at that point.  Reviewed and corrected the figure by Mazars, will come with draft accounts.	Closed
Ref	Action Detail	Who	When	Status
27/06/24	At para 15b 1 Monthly update on progress to be provided by officers	David and Louise		Ongoing





	to the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.			
27/06/24	At para 19a 2 Add procurement at 12th risk (strategic risk register) At para 19c Update wording on Impact description on risk 7 (C2030 risk register) At para 19d Review and amend (as appropriate) the probability score for risk 4 (C2030 risk register)	David		Closed
27/09/24	At para 20i Update on internal audit view on financial scenario planning to be provided to the Audit and Risk Committee	David and Stephanie	At the end of the 24/25 financial year.	
27/09/24	At para 36i Further update on progress made to Procurement Action Plan At para 36ii CEO to mention the impact the Procurement Officer is making in the organisation within his next CEO report for	Louise  Grant	To next meeting on 8 November 2024  Next Formal Board meeting on 22 November 2024	



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	Board meeting on 22 November 2024.			
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## Resource Committee Meeting Minutes

**Held online**

**04 October 2024 at 10.00am**

### **Present**

Russell Jones (Chair)  
Dr Hannah Grist  
Michael Williamson

Sandy Bremner  
Derek Ross

### **In Attendance**

Grant Moir, Chief Executive Officer  
David Cameron, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Director of Corporate Services  
Kate Christie, Head of Organisational Development  
Louise Allen, Head of Finance and Corporate Operations  
Karen Johnstone, Clerk to the Board

### **Apologies**

Jackie Brierton

Lauren McCallum (Deputy Chair)

### **Minutes from the previous meeting for approval**

45. The minutes from the previous meeting on the 09 August were approved with no amendments.

### **Matters arising not covered from previous meeting**

46. There were no matters arising.

Actions from previous meetings	
17 May 2024	
<b>Paper 2</b> 3 The committee would like updates about the Peatland restoration grants and more	Completed Update will be given to Performance Committee



information of the different types of restoration undertaken.	
<b>Paper 5</b> 4 Board members would like to see Eólas to read through the policies available or have a handbook available for Board Members to read.	Completed
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>09 August 2024</b>	
<b>Paper 1</b> 5 Update committee on 25 / 26 and 26 / 27 budget when an update from Scottish Government becomes available.	In hand, will go to board in December
<b>Paper 3</b> 6 Mentioning the board members in the paper to make It clear these values and principles refer to both staff and board members. Circulate with board member once finalised. 7 Add the word "actions" to the last paragraph - our next phase of work through our organisational development and people strategy will be to seek appropriate ways to develop the culture through appropriate behaviours, policies and actions.	Completed  Completed
<b>Paper 4</b> 8 Bring back more Information to the committee on the lone working and accident and Incident procedure once all staff members are trained in the new system.	In hand

## Declarations of interest

47. There were no declarations of interest made.



## **2024 / 25 Budget Monitoring (Paper 1)**

48. Louise Allen presented the paper which sets out an overview of the Park Authority's budget management position at the end of August - month 5 of the 2024 / 25 financial year.
49. The Resources Committee discussed the paper and made the following comments:
- a) A board member raised a concern regarding the next financial year if Scottish Government (SG) were to cut funding again. Head of Finance and Corporate Operations explained that the team are currently working on projections and forecasts for the upcoming budget. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) highlighted that this financial year has seen different deployment of finances, such as the Climate Adaptation Fund, which could be revisited in event of significant reductions in financial allocations from government to the Park Authority. It was noted that more information will be available following the SG budget announcements on 04 December 2024.
  - b) Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Services noted that the current financial position is one of the strongest we have been in, even with the loss of the Nature Restoration Funding (NRF) of £300,000. This financial year, the Park Authority have been spreading their cost more throughout the year, and the underspend of Peatland has been reduced from £700,000 to £200,000 with more contracts and grant applications coming in. Therefore, very positive signals are shown in budget management, even in the context of managing a significant increase in total turnover.
  - c) Sandy Bremner, Convener of the Park Authority Board commented he had met with the Cabinet Secretary, Mhairi Gougeon, this week and in robust terms, expressed deep concerns at the loss of NRF, and noting the importance of Peatland and Nature Restoration.
  - d) A board member asked for clarification on grant-in-aid. Head of Finance and Corporate Operations explained that this was the Park Authority's funding from SG and what the budget is built around.
50. The Resources Committee noted the paper.
51. Action point arising: None.



## **AOCB**

52. None.

## **Date of next meeting**

53. The public meeting ended at 10.14am.

54. The next meeting will take place on 24 January 2025.

Motion for confidential session to protect confidentiality of staff pay and conditions proposals prior to formal negotiations was made and agreed by members.

Resources Committee action points:

ACTION	Status
<b>Action points arising from previous meetings</b>	
<b>09 August 2024</b>	
<b>Paper 1</b> 9 Update committee on 25 /26 and 26/27 budget when an update from Scottish Government becomes available.	In hand, will go to board in December
<b>Paper 4</b> 10 Bring back more Information to the committee on the lone working and accident and Incident procedure once all staff members are trained in the new system.	In hand



## 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
<b>Action points arising from previous meetings</b>	
<b>14 June 2024</b>	
11 February 2022	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<p>Closed</p> <p>Update below</p>
<p>VisitScotland through Rural Transport Infrastructure Funding which had been carried in deferred income deployed in 23/24 to:</p> <p>Glenmore toilet refurbishment £35,000</p> <p>Path survey work £12,339</p> <p>Other projects £6,371</p>	
<b>Action points arising from this meeting</b>	
20 September 2024	
<p>Cairngorms Peatland ACTION Programme (Paper 2)</p> <p>At para 13c</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iii. Updated on carbon credit work undertaken within the sector between academic institutions and landowners.</li> </ul>	<p>Closed</p> <p>Update below</p>
<p>Oxford University have bought an estate outside the National Park with an objective to offset carbon through peatland restoration</p>	





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 major issues. 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:

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:
  - a) 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.
  - b) 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.
  - c) Members discussed the long-term plan for the beavers including species monitoring and monitoring of condition of the flood banks.
  - d) 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:  
Progress towards the project's objectives was noted.
  - a) 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:



- i. 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
<b>Action points arising from this meeting</b>	
<b>13 December 2024</b>	
Cairngorms 2030 programme update quarter 3 2024 (July – September) (Paper 1)	
At para 8	Closed - distributed
1 Heritage Lottery Fund film, filmed in Whitby to be circulated to the Board when available.	Open
2 Azets report when finalised to be brought to a future meeting of the performance committee for information.	



<p>Cairngorms 2030 transport theme overview (Paper 2)</p> <p>At para 12</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 Unreliability of buses and provision of cycle friendly buses to be raised with bus providers as part of the project.</li></ol>	
<p>Bringing beavers back project (Paper 3)</p> <p>At para 16</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2 Head of Conservation to share monthly updates provided to landowners with Board Members at their request.</li></ol>	
<p>AOCB</p> <p>At para 26</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 Paper on youth action to complement a paper on community local led development to be scheduled for September 2025.</li><li>2 Ranger service update to be incorporated into the Active Cairngorms action plan paper.</li></ol>	