



For discussion

Title: Cairngorms 2030 Communities Fund Development

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Purpose

This paper presents an update on the work of the Cairngorms 2030 (C2030) Community Grants Panel, supported by our appointed consultants, Involve, and the staff team, in developing the C2030 Community Grants Fund. The paper is brought to the Audit and Risk Committee at this point to support a discussion on the risk management of this project in advance of consideration of the status of the project by the full board at its meeting on 26 June 2026.

Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- a) Consider the current project risk register together with the risk management updates presented in this paper, and whether any updates to the risk register are required.

Strategic context

1. The Park Authority's full board have previously considered the risk management framework established to support the development of a £1m community grants fund as part of the Cairngorms 2030 Programme. Previous discussions at the board have focused on the recruitment and establishment of a Panel of community representatives; and subsequently the work of that panel in developing grant criteria and decision-making processes. The most recent project risk register presented to the board in March 2026 can be accessed at: [Formal-Board-Paper-3-C2030-Communities-Fund-risk-register.pdf](#)



2. This item has been brought to the Audit and Risk Committee at this time to allow the team an opportunity to highlight any key risk considerations as the work on project development nears completion; and to provide any audit and risk input to this work prior to consideration by the full board.

Strategic policy consideration

3. The Community Grants Panel has now met for seven of its planned nine sessions, with the Advisory Group also having met three times. Various members of the Advisory Group have also had some direct observation of the working of the Panel.
4. The project remains on track with development of grant criteria and decision-making proposals progressing within planned timetable. An update on the progress of the Panel will be provided at the Committee meeting, by which point the paper to be presented to the full board will also be issued. At the time of writing this paper, the key delivery and governance risk considerations to draw to the attention of the Committee are:
 - a) The inclusion of one additional 2.5 hour session for the codesign panel for final considerations has been agreed as an element of risk mitigation to help ensure a viable end product from the design phase. This has a very small added cost consequence.
 - b) A key risk mitigation focus as we come toward the end of the design phase links to project risk 6 as put to the board meeting in March: Confusion between this fund and a range of other community funds (including those run by the Park Authority / Cairngorms Trust)
 - c) Similarly, considering design principles around the potential capacity for the grants to be delivered by the end of the Cairngorms 2030 Programme period (project risk 9) is a significant risk aspect at this point.
 - d) The incoming shift from design phase to delivery phase poses a new risk of loss of momentum and loss of continuity of direction. The teams involved will consider appropriate mitigation approaches for this risk.
 - e) Project risk 8, considering legacy matters, also becomes more pertinent as we consider the outcome of the design phase; the potential delivery consequences of the design; and what legacy benefits we wish to achieve.



5. Oversight of the process will now move from the engagement team to the community grants team, reflecting a shift in the process from design of grant purposes, and criteria to a focus on supporting a grant application and award process. The Community Grants Manager has been involved in this project since inception and there is therefore continuity in knowledge and understanding as the oversight of project delivery transitions between teams.