



Minutes of the Resources Committee meeting

Held at Cairngorms National Park Authority office, Grantown-on-Spey

Online

16 May 2025 at 01.00pm

Present online

Russell Jones (Chair)

Lauren McCallum (Deputy Convener)

Jackie Brierton

Peter Cosgrove

Eleanor Mackintosh

Michael Williamson

Sandy Bremner

Chris Beattie

Hannah Grist

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

None.

Welcome and introductions

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



Approval of minutes of previous meetings

2. The draft minutes from the previous meeting on 24 January 2025 were approved with the amendment of adding Derek Ross as an attendee of the meeting.

Matters arising not covered elsewhere

3. There were no matters arising.

Actions from 24 January 2025 meeting:	
Paper 3 i. Staff and Board Member training on navigating social media while adhering to the policy. ii. Monitoring officer from Moray Council to share their guidance on misuse, sharing and copy rights of webcasts with Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Services. iii. Share FOI policy with Board members to highlight the work being done in this area.	Complete / scheduled Complete Open – FOI update to Audit / Risk Committee June 2025 will cover this.
Paper 1 i. Return to committee the new policy on staff recognition and reward once available.	Open. Policy still in development
Paper 2 i. Arrange for a budget monitoring information session with board members.	Session was delivered – 3 members attended.
Paper 5 i. Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Services and Jackie Brierton to Investigate the possibility of Credit Unions for staff and park wide.	Open



4. The Chair discussed the personal use of social media policy which was brought to a Board Business session on 09 May.
 - a) Concern was raised that Board Members were expected to follow the same policy as staff and questioned if there would be an opportunity to make amendments to this. Deputy Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Director of Corporate Services explained that the expectations for Board Members personal social media use are set out on in the Code of Conduct and supported by specific guidance issued by the Standards Commission. The Park Authority's policy is complementary guidance to the Standards Commission document and should provide additional help in complying with expectations of the Code of Conduct.
 - b) A question was raised that if a Board Member was to fall foul of the guidance, what the repercussions would be. Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Services explained that the Park Authority may receive complaints directly from Stakeholders or members of the public. This would be highlighted to the Convener, the complaint considered under establishes processes, and the Convener may write or discuss the matter with the member. However, the complaint may be made by the stakeholder or member of the public to the Standards Commission, in which case the Commission would handle the situation from there. It was highlighted that the Park Authority have a duty to provide training / awareness on this topic, which has now been done, therefore if a complaint was made, Standards Commission would be notified that Board Members have received the training.
 - c) Discussions were had around the confusion of understanding around the aim of the policy at the Board Business Session and therefore was agreed for Officers to make this clear to members that this is supplementary guidance for best practise. David Cameron, Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Services, agreed to develop an advice note for members in follow up to this discussion and the training session.

Declarations of interest

5. There were no declarations of interest.



2024/25 estimated outturn (Paper 1)

6. Louise Allen, Head of Finance and Corporate Operations presented the paper which sets out an estimated outturn position for the 2024/25 financial year.
7. The Resources Committee discussed the paper and made the following comments:
 - a) Clarity was sought on the £300,000 underspend in peatland restoration. Head of Finance and Corporate Operations explained that of a total £3 million in grant aid available, the Park Authority drew down £2,620,000. However, they should have drawn down £245,000 less as this was not spent. This unspent money goes back to Scottish Government (SG) as a new allocation of money has been set for this year.
 - b) Questions were raised regarding the underspend if this has implications in the future to potentially restrict budget as projects have been delivered with less money. CEO explained the cost of projects depends on if the land is eroded or drained, remoteness and other factors. Estimations are made of the cost of a project, however, until procurement and works start on the ground it is difficult to gauge the cost. It will not affect the allocated budget for the following year. It was noted that underspend will likely decrease due to increasing complexities of projects.
 - c) A Board Member asked if the Peatland underspend could be spent on capital items to facilitate other peatland work throughout the year, eg thermal kit. Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Services confirmed the underspend can be deployed to purchase capital items relevant to the overall peatland restoration programme subject to SG approval.
 - d) A question was raised if peatland applications are scrutinised to ensure the claimants have adhered to muirburn code and not carried out any misdemeanours. CEO confirmed if an applicant has burnt out on an area of peatland and requesting restoration, then this would not be awarded. Also, if an area has high deer numbers, then this would not be a plausible restoration project for certain types of restoration. However, discussions will be needed with NatureScot regarding if an applicant has had a muirburn or grouse licence revoked are they still eligible for peatland restoration funding.
8. The Resources Committee noted the paper agreeing to the recommendations:
 - a) Note the estimated outturn position for the 2024/25 financial year.



9. Action Points Arising: None.

Budget monitoring (Paper 2)

10. Louise Allen, Head of Finance and Corporate Operations presented the paper which sets out an overview of the Park Authority's budget management position at the end of April - month one of the 2025/26 financial year.
11. The Resources Committee discussed the paper and made the following comments:
- a) Following internal discussions on Cairngorms 2030 spend to date, Head of Finance and Corporate Operations gave an update to members in respect of the proportion of Month one spend relating to recharged staff costs, rather than expenditure on direct delivery. There is a budget of £38 million for the whole project, of which £27 million relates to capital costs: woodland expansion, peatland restoration and transport projects. Of the remaining £11 million, £5.5 million is staff costs, and a similar amount is for direct delivery of activities (non-capital spend). An interpretation had been made that staff costs were too high a percentage of the total amount spent in first month, but the Head of Finance and Corporate Operations reassured the Committee that the distribution of spend between staff costs and direct delivery was in line with the budget allocation.
 - b) CEO gave an update on the Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) noting the Park Authority have received confirmation on the funds however, we are waiting on terms; it is hoped that additional internal funds can go into the Climate Adaptation Fund. A further update was given in respect of funding from SG and Transport Scotland, noting the Park Authority is still waiting for an answer. This is being followed up with both organisations and we should have an answer by the end of May. More information will follow to the Board.
12. The Resources Committee noted the paper agreeing to the recommendations:
- a) Consider the budget management position for 2025/26.
13. Action Points Arising: None.



Health and Safety Committee minutes (Paper 3)

14. Kate Christie, Head of Organisational Development presented the paper which sets out the minutes from the most recent Health and Safety Committee Meeting.

15. The Resources Committee discussed the paper and made the following comments:
 - a) Board Members praised the response work carried out by the staff following a serious incident. It was also acknowledged that the increase on reporting of accidents and incidents would be due to the simplification of the reporting system, which was a positive.
 - b) Discussions were had around some staff being unaware the office had a defibrillator available at reception, to which a board member offered to provide training defibrillators for staff to practise on and build confidence in using these. Head of Organisational Development said that we were looking to deliver training provided through the British Heart Foundation, which used the same defibrillator as ours during the course and agreed that while equipment was designed to be used by anyone, training and familiarisation would be helpful.
 - c) Discussion was had around domestic abuse; spotting the signs and if the rangers were given training to handle these situations. Head of Organisational Development explained that Rangers receive conflict and safeguarding training which would cover aspects of domestic abuse. Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Services highlighted that as an Authority we must tread carefully not to expect too much of our ranger services. Rangers should not be blind to these issues arising; however, the Park Authority should be aware of potential issues and how far they can expect Rangers to go during a brief contact.
 - d) A Board Member suggested in relation to the bike project that staff make contact with Police Scotland as they have schemes relating to recovered or stolen goods, such as bikes and may be helpful to the sustainable transport team. Officers agreed to pass this information on to the relevant Head of Service.

16. The Resources Committee noted the paper agreeing to the recommendations:
 - a) Note the Health and Safety Committee meeting minutes.

17. Action Points Arising: None.



Staff Consultative Forum minutes (Paper 4)

18. Kate Christie, Head of Organisational Development presented the paper which sets out the minutes from the most recent Staff Consultative Forum meeting.
19. The Resources Committee discussed the paper and made the following comments:
 - a) There were no comments made.
20. The Resources Committee noted the paper agreeing to the recommendations:
 - a) Note the Staff Consultative Forum meeting minutes
21. Action Points Arising: None.

AOCB

22. None.

Date of Next Meeting

23. The date of the next meeting is 29 August 2025 in person.
24. The meeting concluded at 01.52pm

Motion to move to a confidential session to protect capacity to undertake public business in conduct of pay negotiations; confidentiality of staff pay considerations.

Actions from 24 January 2025 meeting:	
Paper 3	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Share FOI policy with Board members to highlight the work being done in this area. 	Open – FOI update to Audit / Risk Committee June 25 will cover this.



Paper 1 i. Return to committee the new policy on staff recognition and reward once available.	Open. Policy still in development
Paper 2 ii. Arrange for a budget monitoring information session with board members.	Session was delivered – 3 members attended.
Paper 5 i. Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Services and Jackie Brierton to Investigate the possibility of Credit Unions for staff and park wide.	Open
Action points from today's meeting 16 May 2025	
Matters Arising At para 4 c) i. Provide an advice note to Board Members to give a clear understanding that the personal use of social media policy is supplementary guidance for best practise.	