For Information

Draft minutes of the Staff Consultative Forum meeting

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

Hybrid

08 June 2026 at 02.00pm

Present

David Cameron (Chair)
Kate Christie
Russell Jones (Board Member)
Pip Mackie
Nasim Mehrabi
Charlotte Milburn
Mariaan Pita
Adam Streeter-Smith

Apologies

Philip Brooks-Weaver (Prospect)
James Lee
Derek Ross (Board Member)
Mike Woolvin

Item 1: Welcome and Apologies

1. David Cameron (DC) welcomed everyone.

2. Apologies were received from the above.

Item 2: Minutes and Matters Arising

3. The draft minutes of the previous meeting (25 March 2026) were approved. No matters were raised.

Item 3: Papers 1 - Workforce Management Strategy

4. David Cameron (DC) introduced the paper and advised that the organisation was now halfway through delivering the Cairngorms 2030 (C2030) programme, which was due to close in January 2029. The strategy was to support the organisations size and shape as it currently stands and how this will look at the end of the C2030 programme, along with the evolution of the organisation going forward. The organisation remained committed to staff retention, development and the no compulsory redundancy policy. More detailed policies would come forward in due course. Staff will be engaged with more over the next few months to including organising drop-in sessions for both the workforce management and Organisational Development Strategy, if staff felt these would be helpful.

5. The following points were raised:
   a) There being no mention of aspirations to support the local economy or regarding local entry level apprenticeships. DC responded that the Park Authority are engaged in other policy areas that cover these, such as the community wealth building strategy (covering procurement, grant giving, employment) which feed into the economic development of the National Park. KC also responded that there was the youth employment strategy, which covered internships, work experience etc. The Park Authority currently costed for one full time equivalent (FTE) internship every year (which could be split as either three, four-month posts or two, six-month posts). The HR and Ranger teams were also actively engaged in working with schools. Both these strategies could be referenced in the workforce management strategy for contextualisation.
   b) Clarification was sough regarding how the current headcount freeze works in terms of FTE. If a post were recruited and not all of the FTE used, could the 'spare' amount be used elsewhere in the organisation? DC advised that he was looking to establish an FTE pot with Scottish Government with the current agreement being 124 FTE. The organisation has made a case that that the number can't reasonably be immediately reduced due to statutory delivery commitments and externally funded posts. Therefore, the organisation has three to four years to manage this position down as C2030 comes to an end. It will be investigated if the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NHLF) funding can be replaced from a different source in future. There will be work done to identify the areas of the organisation that are possibly more 'under threat' and to develop staff and enable movement into more sustainable areas.

c) Inclusion in the paper recognising that the Park Authority does need to continue providing a basic level service particularly regarding statutory duties (Planning / Access / HR). Some things just going to have to keep on doing, other teams may be able to restructure.

d) The emphasis for Public Sector Reform (PSR) being around saving money through government efficiencies. Clarification if this may involve pay and regrading. Specialist posts (which required professional qualifications etc) could be benchmarked across wider organisations but there was a risk in the redeployment of other staff who were more difficult to benchmark eg project managers. DC responded that the Park Authority have a current job evaluation and benchmarking system which would be used for any new roles and how they sit in our own pay and grading structure. KC was also carrying out work on roles and how they sit against other organisations structures. There would be a need to keep attention on this but also to manage the risk appropriately.

e) A representative advised that this paper had the least amount of interest expressed by staff since joining the Staff Consultative Forum (SCF). It was felt that this may be due to the strategy being too abstract at the current time. Staff will be more interested in the specifics when they come forward. DC appreciated the feedback and expressed that it's always a balance for when to bring things forward to staff.

f) The approaching end of the C2030 programme being a narrow window for potential restructure / redeployment and that it was good to give staff the opportunity to see what was coming forward. It was expressed that if staff from the C2030 programme choose not to accept redeployment, it will be a significant change for the organisation.

g) DC advised that the prospect of organisational change was moving away from a 'risk' to a 'likelihood'. DC advised that thought would have to be given to project work which had a mix of both permanent and fixed term contract staff working on it to ensure the completion of the project.

h) It was suggested that the drop-in sessions cover issues that may affect staff such as, the potential for fixed term contract staff to leave early and how this may affect remaining staff on projects, redeployment etc.

i) KC advised that work was starting on developing an approach to redeployment and staff may have questions once they see this. It was envisaged that default position would be that staff would be redeployed and only if no redeployment was possible would recruitment be opened. A skills passport policy was also in development to support this. It was hoped to give everyone early sight of what was to be coming.

6. DC thanked everyone for the feedback.

Item 4: Paper 2 - Organisational Development and People Strategy

7. Kate Christie (KC) introduced the paper. There had been an Organisational Development Strategy in place covering 2024-27 but this had been overtaken by events and necessitated a new Organisational Development Strategy is being developed. KC highlighted the length of staff service, age of staff, organisational changes (fire bylaws), changes in staff, the quick movement to SharePoint / Apps and use of AI. The document responds to the comments made in the Best Companies survey (2025) and has identified four key themes (which had been discussed at both SMT and Resources Committee). It was envisaged that short term programme boards are established to discuss the actions coming from the key themes. KC advised that the staff comments had been summarised from the Best Companies survey so that staff remained unidentifiable.

8. The following points were raised:
   a) It was stated that in terms of succession planning, staff may be working for longer due to various factors such as cost of living and this needs to be reflected upon, including how members of staff in the older demographic may wish to choose to work differently (less hours / redeployment etc) which may provide opportunities for the organisation. KC advised that there was no retirement policy as there was no retirement age in the UK. KC also advised that it was important to note that staff may leave the organisation and some posts don't have resilience for this. The key areas for this need to be considered. Also to ensure that staff are still enthused by their roles and not getting bored, this may include working collaborative between younger and older members of staff. KC advised that the revised job plan been well received, particularly around the career aspirations section. The changes to the job plan had been made quickly on the back of staff comments from the Best Companies survey. DC responded that when succession planning is done well, it would make other jobs more fulfilling too with opportunities for staff to grow, develop and learn.

b) The need to look at ways to identify those staff that may have 'lost their mojo' and enjoyment for their role. By bringing together staff from different ages, this may help with togetherness and broaden understanding.

c) The requirement for cultural shift / adaptation, this was amplified due to the increased size of the staff complement. DC recognised that adaptation was already happening and being taken forward in a managed way. There was a need to be systemic in bringing in people / teams at the right time. Due to the size of the organisation this wasn't possible to do in an informal way anymore, but there was still a need to protect the culture of being open and dynamic across the organisation.

9. KC thanked everyone for the feedback.

Item 5: Health and Safety update

10. KC advised that a Health and Safety committee meeting is due to be held later in the week. A risk assessment was being developed for the use of 4x4's in tricky terrain (rivers etc), also others covering 4x4 recovery, building security, and Accident and Incident reports. KC recognised that there had been an increase in reports, but this was thought to be due to the reporting procedure being easier through SharePoint.

11. Clarification was sought regarding the PeopleSafe and buddy systems for lone working. It was queried that some teams are using both and if this could be condensed to the most appropriate system per team. KC responded that the PeopleSafe system could not be separated from the buddy system as all lone workers should have a buddy system which works with PeopelSafe, but only those operating at medium and high risk need PeopleSafe. Beccy Stanton was delivering training on the systems to the different teams, and it will be checked that the differences have been explained and covered to all teams.

Item 6: Leadership

12. DC advised that the Board were halfway through series of elections. Sandy Bremner had recently been elected for another three-year term as Convener of the Board. Kenny Deans had been re-elected as the Performance Committee Chair. The Resources Committee was due to have nominations open next Monday for the Chair, with a timetable for further elections due to go to the Board in June. It was advised that Fiona McLean would be coming to the end of her elected term at the end of October. A new member would be reappointed in her place.

Item 7: Equalities

13. KC provided an update that the organisation was due to host a group of Black Professionals Scotland young people at Glenmore Lodge in July. They would be looking at skills in the outdoors. The Park Authority were also due to host a group from Michigan University who would be finding out more about equalities work.

14. Recruitment would be opened for more panel members for the external Equalities Advice Panel, where it was hoped to gain two to four new members. As part of this new recruitment, membership will be reshaped to look for equality expertise. At present there are a lot of members with lived experience but with limited expertise in wider equality fields.

Item 13: AOB

15. No items were raised.

16. The meeting concluded at 3:00pm.

17. Next meeting 7 September 2026.

Ref	Action	Responsible	Due Date
12.06.24 **Para 18**	**Credit Union** To consider how to take forward **16.09.24: Ongoing** **08.06.26: Ongoing**	DC	Sept 24
11.03.26 **Para 6**	**CEO pay –** Distill out stats from draft accounts for SCF **08.06.26 – Due to be completed by Sept 26**	KC	June 26
11.03.26	**Men's Health Guidance**		

Para 12c **Para 12d** **Para 12e**	Add staff led support groups to induction checklists. **11.03.26 - Completed** MHFA's to be made aware of staff support groups for signposting. **08.06.26 - Completed** Information Manager to be contacted regarding how support groups can be best accessed in communications review **08.06.26 - Completed**	PM PM KC	June 26 June 26 June 26
11.03.26 **Para 21 b**	**Staff Survey Results** Themes of comments to be shared with staff **08.06.26 - Completed**	 KC	 June 26