



## **Draft Minutes of the Staff Consultative Forum**

**Held at Cairngorms National Park Authority hybrid**

**11 June 2025 at 02.00pm**

### **In Attendance**

Adam Streeter-Smith  
Charlotte Milburn  
David Cameron (Chair)  
Derek Ross (Board Member)  
James Lee  
Kate Christie  
Mariaan Pita  
Nasim Mehrabi  
Pip Mackie

### **Apologies**

Mike Woolvin  
Richard Hardy (Prospect)  
Russell Jones (Board Member)

### **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. Matters arising and draft minutes were approved.
4. Driving at work policy – it was queried who reviews and monitors expenses in line with the approach to greening. It was confirmed that the finance team monitor carbon emissions. DC advised that it was part of the line manager review when approving expenses to check if there was justification why expenses were being



claimed eg was a pool car available? It was recognised that the organisation was not being completely strict on this issue but was rather allowing staff to be responsible and this fitted in with the culture of trust.

### **Item 3: Paper 1 - Neo Natal Policy (Birth and Adoption)**

5. Pip Mackie (PM) introduced the policy explaining that this was a legislative change that had been introduced on 01 April 2025. This was a right from day one of employment for birth parents and adopters and will provide one week leave for each week that the baby is in neonatal care, up to 12 weeks maximum. This is in addition to existing parental leave.
6. The following points were raised:
  - a) It was asked if the policy met the minimum legal requirements. It was confirmed that it did and provided statutory pay for staff in this situation.
  - b) It was queried that there was enhanced paternity pay therefore was there scope for neonatal leave pay being enhanced in the future. DC advised that there was a legal requirement to get the policy in place and therefore this had been done in line with the statutory minimum pay. However, this policy was complimented by the provision of other leave available to staff eg special leave. It was advised that there would be a look at an overview of leave provision to see if it could be simplified and looked at in the round. KC advised that the current position was also restricted by Scottish Government, as any desire to offer enhanced pay would have to go through the annual pay award approval process. This has created a situation where different public organisations have slightly different policies and enhancements. It was advised that there was a current benchmarking exercise in progress to see where the Park Authority are against other public sector organisations.
7. The policy was adopted.

### **Item 4: Paper 2 - Safeguarding Policy**

8. PM introduced the item and advised that the policy had been revised due to legislative changes that had been introduced from 01 April 2025. It was advised that in line with Scottish terminology, the policy had been retitled 'Child and Protected Adult Safeguarding Policy'. Feedback was requested.



9. The following points were raised:
- a) It was queried if in situations whereby the Park Authority was providing funding to other agencies, was the requirement for them to have proper safeguarding policies in place covered by this policy and how do we satisfy ourselves that they have correct procedures in place. KC advised that this was out with the scope of this policy and that this should be discussed in procurement work, with any contract undergoing due diligence for safeguarding. It could also be specified as a condition of grant funding.
10. The policy was adopted.

### **Item 5: Paper 3 – Working with children and protected adults guidance**

11. PM introduced the guidance and advised this was to support the child and protected adult safeguarding policy. Feedback was requested.
12. The following points were raised:
- a) Clarification was sought regarding the wording in the section 'what not to do', as being ambiguous. PM confirmed this would be looked at and revised.
  - b) Clarification was sought regarding one-to-one situations and transporting young people, would a PVG be required in every instance. It was advised that this would not necessarily be the case, and every situation would need to be looked at on an individual basis. For example, that this may be incidental or the young person themselves may be in work.
  - c) Clarification if training would be held for those people now requiring PVG membership. It was confirmed that there would be. There were training courses available on Electronic Learning Management System (ELMS) and the Park Authority Designated Protection Officers would also be running in house training.
13. The guidance was adopted.

### **Item 6: Paper 4 – Gender Diversity Policy April 2025**

14. KC introduced the policy and highlighted the revisions which were:



- a) The policy had been adopted in September 2023, following extensive consultation and legal advice. In light of the recent Supreme Court ruling about the definition of sex, the wording around toilets was now contrary to the guidance issued. Therefore, initial changes have been made, and the Park Authority lawyers had read and made further adjustments. This included a tightened narrative around changing facilities, and clarification that at the Grantown-on-Spey office, all toilet and changing facilities were single use. It was also advised that in the one instance where there were two toilet cubicles in the same space (in building Number 14), this room had now been fitted with a lock on the main door and is now also a single use facility. The narrative in the policy now reflects this amendment. It was identified that the facilities at the Ballater office were different as the toilets were shared with all hall users and were under the control of the Halls Committee. The Park Authority would contact the Committee to ask how they intend to apply the guidance. The European Human Rights Commission were currently amending the Code of Practice in this regard, and a consultation would be taking place. Once the revisions to the Code were published nationally, we will review if any further changes to the policy were needed. A further amendment had been made to definition of sex in the glossary of terms, in line with the guidance.

**15. The following points were raised:**

- a) It was queried if staff should now be booking single bedrooms as policy not sharing rooms when away overnight for work. This applied to hotel accommodation and was only ever the situation at all-staff away day events, which currently are not being arranged as over-night events due to budgetary constraints. KC advised that the policy focussed on organisational premises but there was also a duty of care to staff when out and about on work related events. The approach was to usually ask if people were comfortable with the accommodation being provided (single / shared). If booking an event, there was a need to be aware of the resources that space had available. At the moment, this was not reflected in the policy position but there was an awareness of it needing to influence more operational matters.
- b) Feedback received from staff was that the policy was again welcomed and supported, as well as the revisions to it. KC advised that a lot of work had



gone into developing the policy and highlighted the Park Authority commitment to fairness and diversity.

- c) The wording in the section about what constitutes disrespectful behaviour, covering “refusing to work with someone” was raised, it was advised that ‘because of gender identity’ needs to be stated for clarification. KC advised this would be included.

- 16. The revised policy was adopted.

### **Item 7: Paper 5 – First Aid Needs Assessment (FANA)**

- 17. KC introduced the paper. This document was required to show a methodical and robust assessment of what was the appropriate number of First Aid trained staff for the needs of the organisation, based on structure and size. It was recognised that the previous FANA was out of date and required a review. It was recognised that since that original assessment was done, we had moved to hybrid working, which may require more first aid trained staff. The FANA had been through the Health and Safety Committee, who considered the correct levels of first aid trained staff were identified. The FANA would be reviewed yearly. Feedback was requested but no points were raised, and the Staff Consultative Forum (SCF) were content to approve the FANA.

### **Item 8: Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) - Staff Health Information**

- 18. PM introduced the paper which explained what health data we need to capture, and who would have access to this data (just the First Aiders). Feedback was requested but no points were raised.
- 19. The guidance was adopted.

### **Item 9: Paper 7 - Collective Action Plan Band D and E Engagement**

- 20. KC introduced the paper advising that this was an ongoing piece of work. Paul Davison (as a band E peer) had helped facilitate consultation with staff in bands D and E. The objective was to enhance engagement at these grades. From this consultation and including discussion with Senior Management Team (SMT), the



collective action plan was developed (which included a number of actions, including a plan to deliver Human Resources (HR) bitesize training for line managers to ensure more consistency across policy implementation). This action plan was being shared with SCF to close the loop and for information. DC advised that another action was for SMT to look at updating the terms of reference for staff groups, including roles and responsibilities and to ensure everything fits together – an overview will come back to SCF. Feedback was requested.

**21. The following points were raised:**

- a) SCF were very supportive of this work. A staff representative said they had spoken to staff in Bands D and E about this work and it was recognised that not many organisations would go this far to engage which was really great.
- b) That the ongoing discussions may refine and set out further actions eg developing a formal approach to reward and recognition, though limited to what can be done as public organisation. Consideration needed to be given to how this tied in with the culture of the organisation and the need to take everyone along. DC advised that work was ongoing by the HR team on this matter and would be brought back to SCF in due course.
- c) The need for job plans to include space to keep up with organisational news eg Eolas etc. It was advised that on average there were seven / eights Eolas posts per week, therefore if staff did not have time to read these then something else going on. The job plan was about work plan priorities and staff being supported. The possibility of reinstating the newsletter - bringing together all information in one easily accessible format. It was recognised that for part time staff there was a bigger pressure on to read Eolas posts within their limited working hours – newsletter would be more digestible. It was recognised that it was a valid part of staff time to read and keep up to date with organisational news.
- d) A suggestion that some of the information posted on Eolas could be moved to other communication streams eg email. It was advised that Eolas was the tool that was being used for staff information and that other streams were there for staff to use.
- e) The possibility of staff missing important news on Eolas and a conversation needing to be had around this. A response that it was not about carving out time for staff but for them to feel supported to read communications and manage their workload to do this. The possibility of including a standard line



in all job plans regarding keeping up to date with communications and briefings.

- f) It was advised that some communications eg IT are important and time critical. DC advised that business critical information should be sent as standard by email. There was an opportunity to revisit how Eolas was structured and what info goes on it.
- g) KC advised that we would be looking to establish an Internal Communications Group to look at all our methods of communicating with staff and offer guidance and support.

22. The paper was acknowledged.

#### **Item 10: Health and Safety Update**

23. KC advised that the Health and Safety Committee minutes were available on Eolas.

24. There was a revised RA template, which was now much simpler to use and would be rolled out through line manager training and be presented to SMT. This would be supported by a post on Eolas covering how it should be completed. All RA's would be moved onto the new template.

25. It was queried if the Park Authority were not hosting an event but were invited along, is there a RA to cover this situation (this was specifically in the context of some Communications staff being invited at last minute to accompany some television filming on a remote location). It was raised that this could be covered by the generic Filming RA but also that all staff always seek to undertake a Dynamic RA in these situations. This could also be supported by having an information briefing sheet to send in advance to third parties (for in the field) – including typical land conditions, typical Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), footwear etc. and a second one for village / townscape scenarios. It would still be for the third party to do their own RA but this could be sent as standard correspondence.

26. The current PPE process was queried, and the possibility of the organisation buying the equipment instead of staff having an outlay to be reclaimed through expenses. KC advised this was being currently looked at. As a starting point the price caps were quite low and people typically wanted kit that was above the upper limit and therefore, they had to purchase, provide receipt and claim to the



limit. The PPE upper limits have now been revised, including a robust process for approval of PPE. If the item is within the price cap, admin can purchase. If people want to spend more, then they do have to go through the expenses process (with expenses being processed every week). If the collective amount was over £300 it was being looked at the possibility that the admin team could make the purchase.

27. It was queried that PPE was owned by organisation, therefore where staff had bought a more expensive item the organisation may own part of that item. If staff leave, the Park Authority would have to reclaim any costs. It was raised that staff requiring PPE are more likely to be at lower end of salary bands scale and therefore it seems unfair to ask them to reclaim any expenses. DC advised this would be looked at and would be brought back to SCF, setting out a process for purchase.
28. It was advised that there are current negotiations taking place with a new clothing brand (through UK National Parks) and they will provide some PPE kit which might overtake our existing procedures.

### **Item 11: Leadership**

29. DC advised that Chris Beattie had resigned as of 13 June 2025, he was the nominated member for Angus Council and was the elected Planning Convener. A new member will come forward in due course. Russell Jones has replaced him as Planning Convener and takes up role from 14 June 2025.

### **Item 12: Equalities**

30. KC advised that there was now support group page on Eolas. These were staff led groups and included for neurodiversity, carers, menopause and auto immune conditions.
31. The Park Authority had recently supported Black Scottish Adventurers on a walk in the area.
32. The organisation had also supported Highland Pride, with staff taking part in the parade and working at the Park Authority stall. The response was that people were glad to see the Park Authority represented at the event.





33. The Park Authority were hosting Black Professionals UK on 03 July, as an opportunity to meet various members of staff and chat about careers and the environmental sector.

### Item 13: AOB

34. No items were raised.
35. The meeting concluded at 03:23pm.
36. Next meeting 10 September 2025.

Ref	Action	Responsible	Due Date
<b>06.12.21</b> <b>Para 19</b>	Electric Car Salary Sacrifice Scheme Future updates to be brought back to SCF  27.06.22: Finance team looking into and any proposal will be brought to MT 07.11.22: Still progressing 25.01.23: Ongoing 20.03.23: Update: Support had been received from NatureScot who had recently launched a similar scheme. Any proposals would go to MT then be brought back to SCF 19.06.23: still progressing 19.02.24: Craig Lewis from the finance team will come to SMT to give an update. 12.06.24: Ongoing <b>16.09.24: Craig Lewis (finance team) to pull together a paper for SMT setting out proposals and options on EV. Should be at SMT in next month and should be at next SCF.</b>	KC	June 22
<b>19.02.24</b> <b>Para 21</b>	Internal Recruitment Policy	KC	Jun 24



	<p>Internal recruitment opportunities not being circulated to be raised with Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) / NatureScot.</p> <p>12.06.24: SEPA requested that the internal recruitment of posts was paused. NatureScot are keen for this to be reinstated, as are the Park Authority.</p> <p><b>16.09.24: Discussions ongoing, and will be updated in due course.</b></p> <p><b>11.06.25: Ongoing</b></p>		
<p><b>12.06.24</b></p> <p><b>Para 18</b></p>	<p><b>Credit Union</b></p> <p>To consider how to take forward</p> <p><b>16.09.24: Ongoing</b></p>	<p>DC</p>	<p>Sept 24</p>
<p><b>12.03.25</b></p> <p><b>Para 11a</b></p>	<p><b>Driving at Work Policy:</b></p> <p>Include link to Whistleblowing or Complaints Policy – whichever is appropriate.</p> <p><b>11.06.25: Complete</b></p>	<p>KC</p>	<p>Mar 25</p>
<p><b>12.03.25</b></p> <p><b>Para 25</b></p>	<p><b>Equalities</b></p> <p>Eolas page to be developed</p> <p><b>11.06.25: Complete</b></p>	<p>KC</p>	<p>Sept 25</p>