



For information

Draft minutes of the Staff Consultative

Forum

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

Hybrid

11 March 2026 at 12.00pm

Present

Charlotte Milburn

David Cameron (Chair)

James Lee

Kate Christie

Mariaan Pita

Mike Woolvin

Nasim Mehrabi

Pip Mackie

Russell Jones (Board Member)

Apologies

Adam Streeter-Smith

Derek Ross (Board Member)

Philip Brooks-Weaver (Prospect)



Item 1

Welcome and apologies

1. David Cameron (DC) welcomed everyone and advised that Philip Brooks-Weaver is now the appointed the Park Authority Prospect contact.
2. Apologies were received from the above.

Item 2

Minutes and Matters Arising

3. The draft minutes were approved.
4. The following matters were raised:
 - a) A comment had been received regarding the dismissive tone of the September minutes covering the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) pay process update. DC advised that the aim of the Staff Consultative Forum (SCF) was to be open and consultative, particularly where there was a meaningful opportunity for staff to have input and shape what was possible. In this case, the update was for transparency, with no opportunity for staff to have input. Scottish Government (SG) have set separate guidance for CEO pay. The Board and Board Convener take the relevant guidance and then give their recommendations back to SG. Therefore, this isn't a matter for standard consultation through SCF. The update was for information and for staff to be aware of the process for transparency purposes.
 - b) DC advised that there were standard statistics that will be included in the final accounts covering the CEO pay levels. These include the gap between CEO pay and the next highest director and also a multiplier of the median across organisation from the average pay level. This will give a comparison against the wider organisation. The finance team are currently working on the 2026 accounts, which will include these calculations. These figures are expected to be published around June 2026 and will be included in public papers and brought back to SCF giving transparency around this.
 - c) DC advised that the CEO pay for 2025/26 had been approved and was in line with the wider staff pay award for bands F-G, that being a phased award,



part implemented in April 2025, and part in January 2026. This was a single-year award. CEO Pay Policy 2026/27 has not yet been published.

Item 3

Papers 1: Energy Savings Trust Vehicle Loan

5. Kate Christie (KC) introduced the paper, which had been drafted by the Financial Accountant, as follow up information on the paper previously brought to SCF regarding electric vehicle (EV) salary sacrifice scheme. There was a request that staff representatives make staff aware of this loan scheme and signpost them to the paper should they require information on this scheme.
6. The following point was raised:
 - a) Thanks were expressed for the follow through on this paper and information.
7. DC thanked everyone for the feedback.

Item 4

Paper 2: Men's health and wellbeing guidance

8. Kate Christie (KC) introduced the paper and advised that it sits under the overarching Health and Wellbeing Policy. It was noted that the Health and Wellbeing Policy requires updating as it now encompasses a suite of policies and guidance that have recently been introduced by the organisation, such as the endometriosis and menstrual health, pregnancy loss, fertility treatment and neurodiversity policies. It was noted that consideration had been given to whether or not we needed this as a guidance document or a would an annual campaign be adequate in terms of covering this issue. It was concluded that a campaign was just at a moment in time and would therefore only impact those who chose to engage with it at that moment, whereas this guidance note is available for staff to access at any point and is therefore more sustainable and has more longevity and impact. This guidance would be supported by campaigns, as appropriate. Feedback was requested.
9. The following points were raised:



- a) Support for the guidance and it is balancing some of the other documents in the suite of guidance.
- b) It covers a topical subject and good that the organisation has developed this.
- c) An awareness that there are several staff support groups across the organisation that are linked to guidance. How can staff best be made aware of these groups. KC advised that the staff groups are listed on the Eolas Equalities page, they will also be included in the various induction checklists.
- d) A suggestion that the mental health first aiders (MHFAs) are made aware of the groups for signposting. There could also be a quarterly update on Eolas.
- e) It was highlighted that there was currently work being done on internal communications at the moment, KC to discuss with Paul Davison how these informal groups may be best supported by the changing use of Teams channels.

10. KC thanked everyone for the feedback and the guidance was adopted.

Item 5

Paper 3: Probation Policy

11. KC and PM introduced the paper. Seeking to increase probation period from six months to nine months, introduction of short-term contract probation period and flowcharts. Feedback was requested.
12. The following points were raised:
 - a) Clarification if line managers were provided with the probation policy in advance of a new member of staff starting. It was confirmed that the policy and forms were provided to the line manager in advance of the new starter joining the organisation. The documents were also sent to the new starter as part of their onboarding process.
 - b) Querying why probation may be extended if a line manager was absent. KC advised that extension of probation should not be seen as a negative but rather a support mechanism for the member of staff. If line manager was absent, the environment had not been such that the individual was able to be fully supported by their line manager to meet their objectives.
13. PM thanked everyone for the feedback and the policy was adopted.



Item 6

Paper 4: Annual Job Plan

1. KC introduced the form and advised that it had been revised to include training requests, personal growth and aspirations. This was in response to some staff survey feedback about Personal Growth, which had not shown any improvement on the previous survey. Feedback was requested.
2. The following points were raised:
 - a) The new additions were welcomed.
 - b) The possibility of staff being able to specify the priority of training / development. This would be in discussion with the line manager, in terms of staff capacity to undertake training whilst balancing workload priorities. KC advised that some staff may not have any training requirements and are happy in their role, therefore they would not need anything completing in this section. DC advised that the section could include areas that staff would like to do but are not able to undertake due to capacity as this makes the HR team aware.
 - c) The need to recognise that this is a dynamic document.
 - d) A request to see a top-down approach from SMT, with a requirement for all staff to complete the plan.
 - e) The fact the form specified the need to include time for staff to check Eolas and space for forward thinking was welcomed.
 - f) The possibility of including a wellbeing section. KC responded that this is best placed in the performance development conversation form (PDC) rather than the job plan form. The job plan guides the overall and factual job requirements for the next 12 months. The PDCs are where delivery of targets and activities are discussed and monitored and where issues may be discussed including mental health. The HR team will be revising the PDC form to update it and make it more user friendly and will ensure there is a specific and visible prompt regarding wellbeing, this will be brought back to SCF and link will be provided on the job plan form.
 - g) A suggestion that points three and four on part two about aspirations are optional. This was agreed.
 - h) The inclusion of recognising dependencies that staff may have on specific tasks which may also help address one of the shadow areas of the staff survey, that being the perception that teams are not working well together.



This may highlight the need for support from the line manager in these areas. Agreed that this to be included in the form, in the column in part one that deals with activities to deliver objectives.

- i) Clarification of what the organisation is going to do with point five regarding the individual specifying any skills / qualifications that the organisation may not already be aware of. Was there a clear plan for why this is being asked. KC responded that this is being asked as part of the Operational Development Strategy that is in development and the possibility of developing a future skills passport and a more agile workforce. This will help the organisation identify skills gaps, potential for redeployment and identifying staff to be involved in specific project working groups which are increasingly being established to support work and projects. This will help to broaden staff input across the organisation outwith the individual's current working space.

14. DC thanked everyone for the feedback and the guidance was adopted.

Item 7

Paper 5: Staff Survey Results

15. KC introduced the paper and advised that a drop-in session had taken place and teams results shared and discussed within teams. This SCF agenda item was providing a further opportunity for staff to be made aware of the results and gather comments. Feedback was requested.
16. The following points were raised:
 - a) What is a 'one star' organisation? KC advised that this is the result of the Best Companies Scoring Index (BSI) developed by Best Companies using various algorithms based on all our staff response scores. Our response BSI placed the organisation at one star, and we actually just missed being a two-star organisation. The maximum index score is three stars.
 - b) Question if a summary of written responses will be shared with staff. KC advised that the HR team were currently working on these and the themes of these will be shared in due course. She explained that we could not simply provide a document with all the comments, as some comments may identify specific individuals or teams, which we would not want to do.



- c) Acknowledgement that the comments should be confidential – however, it was raised that some staff may wish their comments to be known. Is there an option on the survey to tick if you want your comments to be shared. KC advised that the survey is predesigned to be completely confidential. DC advised that if anyone wants to share their comments with the organisation (and be known) a mechanism could be explored for staff to do this.

17. KC thanked everyone for the feedback and the guidance was adopted.

Item 8

Verbal Update: Public Holiday 15 June 2026

18. KC advised that SG have approved 15 June 2026 as a public holiday, this is the day after Scotland play their first match in the Football World Cup. The Park Authority staff will be getting this public holiday with the office being closed on this date. However, not all staff will be able to take this eg rangers due to being required for patrolling duties. The rangers will still receive the additional day (added to annual leave) but to be taken at a suitable time.

19. No points were raised.

Item 9

Verbal Update: Pay Award 2026/27

20. DC introduced the item.

21. The following points were raised:

- a) The additional 1% pay uplift for 2025/26 for which approval from SG's Remuneration Group had been secured has now been applied from 01 January 2026, and an extra 0.7% had been approved to be included in the April 2026/27 pay award, provided our budgets allowed for this. This would take the pay award for 2026/27 to 3% instead of 2.3%. The budget was due to be presented to the Board on 27 March 2026. After this, should approval be received the 3% would be applied from 01 April 2026. Further communications will follow after 27 March 2026 meeting.



Item 10

Health and Safety update

22. KC advised that a Health and Safety committee meeting had been held last week. Minutes are available on Eolas. Representatives were asked for any items to be discussed – no items were raised.

Item 11

Leadership

23. DC advised that the recruitment process for a new Board Member position was underway. This would be a replacement for Fiona McLean who was due to step down at the end of September 2026. The application process is now closed, with 26 applications received. A shortlist meeting was taking place later in March, followed by interviews in April.
24. The next few months will see the period for the current Board Convener and Deputy ending. An agreed timeline for the election process will be discussed in March.
25. A request for an update to be included on Eolas when there's a change in Board members, along with a bio for new members, to keep staff informed. It was agreed that this was a good idea, this happens on the website so can be replicated on Eolas.
26. Russell Jones responded that the Board are also interested in what staff are doing. Look at how to bring staff and board together both for one off occasions and on an ongoing basis. It was suggested the possibility for some staff to join the Board for lunch (like happens at Planning Committee), this would encourage networking and finding out what is happening across the organisation.

Item 12

Equalities

27. KC advised that the Equalities Advisory Panel (EAP) were having an away day at the end of March. This would help to showcase the work the Park Authority are



doing on equalities. Reps were asked for any items to be discussed – no items were raised.

Item 13

AOB

28. No items were raised.

29. *The meeting concluded at 1:25pm. Next meeting 8 June 2026.*

Ref	Action	Responsible	Due Date
19.02.24 Para 21	<p>Internal Recruitment Policy Internal recruitment opportunities not being circulated to be raised with 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 CNPA.</p> <p>16.09.24: Discussions ongoing and will be updated in due course.</p> <p>11.06.25: Ongoing</p> <p>10.09.25: Hasn't been progressed due to recruitment freeze and scrutiny from Scot Gov.</p> <p>03.12.25: Due to significant reduction in recruitment, no current appetite to resume internal recruitment pool (NatureScot/SEPA). Complete. Come back to March SCF meeting with info on public sector reform.</p>	KC	Jun 24



	11.03.26 – work continuing but not moved on to provide update. Complete		
12.06.24 Para 18	Credit Union To consider how to take forward 16.09.24: Ongoing	DC	Sept 24
03.12.25 Para 7f Para 7g	Flexi Policy Training sessions to be run on completion of flexi sheets. Policy to make reference to the Right to Disconnect Charter 11.03.26 – Work currently being done on new Sharepoint flexi sheet, training to follow once ready. Policy updated. Complete.	PM KC	June 26 Mar 26
03.12.25 Para 12 c	Overseas Work & Travel Guidance Remove reference to Ireland. Policy to cover work and travel outwith the UK. 11.03.26: Complete	PM	Dec 26
11.03.26 Para 6	CEO pay – Distill out stats from draft accounts for SCF	June 26	June 26
11.03.26 Para 12c Para 12d Para 12e	Men's Health Guidance Add staff led support groups to induction checklists. 11.03.26 - Completed MHFA's to be made aware of staff support groups for signposting.	PM PM KC	June 26 June 26 June 26



	Information Manager to be contacted regarding how support groups can be best accessed in communications review		
11.03.26 Para 15b	Probation policy Update to state that extension of probation should be seen as a supportive mechanism 11.03.26 – Complete	KC	June 26
11.03.26 Para 18g Para 18h	Job Plan Points 3 and 4 – have as optional. The inclusion of staff dependencies being included. 11.03.26 - Complete	KC	June 26
11.03.26 Para 21 b	Staff Survey Results Themes of comments to be shared with staff	KC	June 26