

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES  
COMMITTEE MEETING of  
THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**held via Lifesize Video Conferencing  
on 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2022 at 3.30pm**

**PRESENT**

Deirdre Falconer (Chair)	Ian McLaren
Carolyn Caddick (Vice Chair)	Pippa Hadley
Derek Ross	
Xander McDade (Board Convenor) from paper 8	

**In Attendance:**

David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services, CNPA  
Kate Christie, Head of Organisational Development, CNPA  
Lynn Anderson, Minute Clerk, CNPA

**Apologies:**

Geva Blackett

**Welcome and Apologies**

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Declaration of Interests**

2. There were no interests declared.

**Minutes of last meeting held – for approval**

3. The draft Minutes of the last meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> February were agreed, proposed by Carolyn Caddick.

**Matters Arising**

4. At Para 31) – Organisational chart to be circulated to Board. Closed  
At Para 35) - Amend chart re Exec team structure. Closed

**Confidential section**

5. At Para 20i) – ) with regards the non-consolidated payment for staff on band max, members asked to see what the figures would look like if it was applied on a sliding scale, with those in the higher bands, above £40,000 receiving less of a percentage than those in the lower bands eg 3% to those earning £25,000 or less, 2% for those earning between £25-£40,000 and 1% for those earning above £40,000.  
Supplementary Paper to be taken back to RC and approved. Closed
6. At Para 35) – Convener to contact members for feedback re CEO appraisal. Closed

**22/23 Budget Monitoring (Paper 1)**

7. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services, introduced this paper which presents an early overview of the Cairngorms NPA's budget management position at the end of the first month of the 2022/23 financial year, as at 30 April 2022.
8. The Resources Committee is asked to:
  - i. Consider the budget management position for 2022/23;
9. The Director of Corporate Services explained that this paper was written at a very early stage in the current year. The key focus at such an early stage is the robustness of estimates for staff investment and the payroll budget. There was a slight underspend in Month 1, however, this was a good starting point for that budget line. As it is so early in the financial year it is too early to look at other parts of the budget. A fuller budget review will be done at the end of the first quarter when actual budget will be compared against our profiled budget spend. More information will be circulated to members in July.
10. The Resources Committee discussed the paper and made the following comments:
11. A member asked whether the next period of recruitment had been factored into the staff budget profiling?
12. The Director of Corporate Services confirmed that this had been built into the staff budget projections, although actual spend being seen will depend on when the post is recruited and that timeline will have to be factored in.
13. The Chair thanked the Director of Corporate Services for the paper.
14. The Resources Committee indicated they were all happy with the budget management position as at 30 April, 2022.

## **21/22 Estimated Outturn (Paper 2)**

15. The Director of Corporate Services introduced this paper which presents an estimated outturn position for the 2021/22 financial year.
16. The Resources Committee is asked to:
  - i. Consider the estimated outturn position for the 2021/22 financial year.
17. The Director of Corporate Services explained this paper sets out the position at a very early stage in the final accounts process. Overall, there has been a slight underspend in the total combined Scottish Government grant and generated funding estimated at around £189,000, equivalent to 1.97% against a budget funding total of £9,590,000. This is within the acceptable range of the KPI which focuses on budget management to a year-end break even position.
18. The main underspend has been seen in the Peatland and Biodiversity programmes. Some of the underspend in the Peatland programme is due to a phasing issue with some of the claims and work completion rolling into April. There is an opportunity to discuss reprofiling the funds with Scottish Government.

19. The Chair commented that this was a nice position to be in and to have that amount of underspend but asked what happens to the underspend?
20. The Director of Corporate Services explained that the Core underspend will be absorbed into our accounts provided it remains at the very low level indicated. Conversations will carry on with Scottish Government to hopefully reprofile the Peatland funding. There is always a possibility that underspends are recovered in cash terms from future years' allocations, although this is unlikely with very small figures.
21. The Chair commended the Team for such good accounting and budget management practice over the year.

### **Equal Pay Audit (Paper 3)**

22. Kate Christie, Head of Organisational Development introduced this paper by explaining that an equal pay audit is designed to assess pay levels across the organisation in terms of gender equality. The CNPA is committed to conducting such an audit as part of its approach to equalities and continues to assess pay for gender on an ongoing basis.
23. The Head of Organisational Development explained this is an annual audit which scrutinises salaries across the whole organisation. The gender pay gap continues to reduce and is significantly lower than it was last year. However, there are some shadow areas notably the senior management team of 11 only consists of 2 females. There is a lot of work being done in job descriptions to ensure the essential criteria do not include things which might preclude people from applying.
24. The Chair commented that it is very positive to see that over the last 5 years there has been a downward direction however agreed there is still work to be done. The Chair commented that it was good that consideration is being given to the wording in job descriptions to hopefully attract more female applicants however, they did point out that the highest pay grades consisted of all male staff and it would be good to see a change. All recognised that this is a longer-term aspiration given that there are no changes planned in Executive Team level roles and only turnover in posts would create opportunity for change at this level.
25. The Chair asked why the statistics seemed to indicate that the part time rate for females seemed to be lower than their male counterparts. The Head of Organisation Development explained this was due to the fact that there were more female staff in part time roles which were in the in lower paid grades, whereas most of the male staff who were part-time were in roles at the higher grades rather than males being paid more.
26. A member asked whether in terms of senior management positions was it a case that more men applied for those positions. The Head of Organisation Development confirmed this was true but was not sure why.
27. The Director of Corporate Services explained that they had recently been involved in some recruitment exercises and a couple of candidates had commended the organisation on its organisational flexibility and its flexible working patterns and

approach. This is the type of working approach which will open at the employment market.

28. A member asked whether there was a low turnaround at senior management level? The Head of Organisational Development confirmed there were typically few opportunities at that level, although there had been some recruitment at that level over the past year, with resignations and moves resulting in 4 vacancies at this level over the last 18 months. She explained that applicant statistics are monitored and that there had been more male than female applicants for the 4 posts. Of the 4 posts one was appointed to a woman. There has therefore been some improvement at Head of Service level, with two of these roles now women in contrast to only one last year.

29. The paper was noted

#### **Right to Disconnect (Paper 4)**

30. The Head of Organisational Development introduced this paper which sets out the background behind the Right to Disconnect Charter. Scottish Government Finance Pay Policy for 2022/23 introduced the requirement for employers to have meaningful discussions with Trade Unions about the Right to Disconnect. CNPA has engaged with Prospect, with whom they have a Voluntary Recognition Agreement. As a result, and in discussion with the Senior Management Team, this charter has now been produced.

31. The Resources Committee is asked to give their views on this Charter, prior to consultation with staff through the Staff Consultative Forum.

32. The Head of Organisational Development explained this charter was about staff having the right to disconnect from their work and not feel they have to respond to work out with their normal working hours. This was recognised as an issue during lockdown with people working different hours from home.

33. The Chair asked why is this paper being brought to the Committee now? The Head of Organisational Development confirmed this was because it was part of the pay policy for this financial year.

34. The Chair wondered whether it was the staff themselves that felt this was an issue that needed addressed. The Head of Organisational Development explained that recent staff surveys suggested that staff would welcome this and did consider this important, while the aspects of organisational approach to staff highlighted in the paper was entirely in line with and supportive of our organisational culture and values.

35. The Director of Corporate Services explained that whilst Prospect has been promoting this from a union perspective it does also form part of Scottish Government pay policy. Prospect were keen that a new formal policy/procedure should be implemented however the view of SMT is this charter should be viewed as a standard supporting our organisational values.

36. A member pointed out that, with a view to staff mental health and well being, the charter may be useful as it did not support “internalised capitalism”, which she explained was the belief that unless you’re working yourself into the ground, you’re failing at life.?
37. The Chair asked if management team recognises the staff “right to disconnect” for management - do management team have the same ability. Is there a rota? The Director of Corporate Services confirmed there is a on-call rota and that members of the senior team are usually on call about 4 – 5 weeks of the year each. There was respect within the management team of members’ right to be away from work, computer and phone.
38. The Resources Committee were happy that this charter now went to Staff Consultative Forum for their consideration.

### **Best Companies Staff Survey Results (Paper 5)**

39. The Head of Organisational Development introduced this paper and asked the Resources Committee to consider the following:
  - i. Would members agree that the areas identified above are the right ones to focus attention on going forward?
  - ii. Has this initial analysis missed any key areas that members consider should also be the focus of further exploration/actions in terms of being areas that we should seek to retain (highlights) or improve (shadows)
40. The Head of Organisational Development explained that this survey is undertaken by staff every 2 years. This survey provides a lot of useful information and is both detailed and comprehensive. The HR team have gone through all the information from the survey and produced this high-level analysis and identified what they thought were the key highlights and shadows of organisational operations and working in the view of the staff group. Staff had been consulted and had agreed with those. This data will be used to inform the organisational development strategy for the next 18 months.
41. The Head of Organisational Development said that after 2 very difficult years, we considered staff engagement to be relatively positive and although the 77% response rate was lower than in previous years, which we would explore further, in terms of the survey world this was still a good response rate.
42. The Chair thanked the HR team for pulling all the information together.
43. The Chair noted that the well being factor is down, people have indicated they are feeling swamped and workloads have increased. Another shadow is around power struggles within Teams and a lack of collaboration between Teams. However the biggest concern for them is the mention of people using intimidation to get what they want and, the problem of overall leadership figures being down. The Chair wondered what steps can be taken to resolve this?

44. The Head of Organisational Development explained that it was important to realise that these statistics still showed a relative minority of staff perceiving these points as issues and it was important for members to note they are not absolute issues across the organisation. The focus over the next few months will be finding ways to address all these issues. With regards to staff wellbeing and also results about team dynamics, working in lockdown conditions has resulted in a sense of isolation, people don't feel as much part of a team as they may have in the past. We were hopeful that as staff emerged from lockdown and started to access the office in increasing numbers, these factors would start to become more positive. In addition we have trained several more staff on Mental Health First Aid, thereby increasing the number of Mental Health First Aiders and had also appointed a HR Wellbeing Champion within the organisation to support staff.

*Derek Ross at this point left the meeting.*

45. It is hoped that with staff back in the office this will help encourage a better team dynamic. The office has been reconfigured in such a way as to create more space for collaboration.

46. In terms of Leadership there have been a few changes over the last few months and this needs to be bedded in. She explained that we recently had a facilitated Insights leadership session with the Senior Management Team. The Head of Organisational Development and Chief Executive Officer have also scheduled in sessions with new staff to discuss the organisation, its processes and values.

47. The Head of Organisational Development concluded by saying that on the back of this survey an action plan will be developed which will feed into the Organisation Development Strategy with staff being re-surveyed next year.

48. A member commented that the response rate was good and thought that with remote working and covid the results could have been more negative. It is good that senior management team are doing some developmental work focusing on Leadership.

49. The Director of Corporate Services commented that in this survey any score above 4 is positive, so the survey results are positive even after 2 years of lockdown and a fairly high staff turnover which has resulted in a lot of new staff in the organisation. In terms of leadership working remotely has increased the feeling of staff that senior management and the Board are even more remote.

50. In conclusion the Committee members present agreed that the areas identified were the right ones going forward. A Board member did comment that there needs to be an awareness of how things were, how things are and how things will change as we move forward to keep the process reactive.

## **Board Skills Matrix (Paper 6)**

*Derek Ross rejoined the meeting*

51. The Head of Organisational Development introduced this paper which gives some background on the board skills matrix and why board members are being asked to complete this adapted version to account for the new National Park Partnership Plan. A few additional knowledge areas have been added. Questionnaire will be on-line via Survey Monkey.
52. A member commented that this will be useful for the appointment Committee within Scottish Government to know where the gaps are when it comes to board appointments.
53. The Chair explained that that this was the right time to do this to ensure we will have the right skills to fill any gaps and, where needed, provide training.
54. A member asked that this should happen after the formal board meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> June. The Convenor can mention the survey under AOB.
55. The Head of Organisation Development agreed this timeline.
56. The Resources Committee noted the self assessment form.

### **Public Sector Equality Duty 2021: Update 2022 (Paper 7)**

57. The Head of Organisational Development introduced this paper by explaining to members this report is the reissued April 2021 report, enhanced and updated, making it more engaging and showing the equalities is at the forefront and the Park is “A Park for All”.
58. The Chair commended the team on the document and thought it excellent and easily accessible document.
59. A board member thought it very readable, they liked the links and was well put together.
60. The Head of Organisational Development explained that this document had never been taken to the Board before however felt it contained important information that they should be aware of. The updated report will be on the agenda for the formal board meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> June.
61. Committee members were asked to note the report prior to its presentation to the full board.

*Xander McDade, Convenor joined the meeting.*

### **SCF Minutes (Paper 8)**

62. Minutes were noted – no further discussions/actions.

### **Health & Safety Minutes (Paper 9)**

63. Minutes were noted – no further discussions/actions.

## **Equalities (Verbal Update)**

64. The Head of Organisational Development updated the Board on 2 items.
65. A contractor had been appointed to carry out equalities training with both staff and board members. An inception meeting was held this week. Training for the board will commence in Q4 Jan-March 2023. Training with staff will begin this year.
66. We have signed up with the LGBT Youth charter to ensure we can be as inclusive as we can be for all people.
67. A Board member asked what does signing up to this charter actually mean?
68. The Head of Organisational Development explained that this will involve some training for staff and managers and also relevant policies will be shared with this organisation to ensure they are inclusive. They will also look at the imagery on our website to advise whether it needs enhanced.
69. A board member wondered whether any changes to policy would require board agreement? The Head of Organisational Development confirmed if it was a significant change then it would, however, they did not imagine any huge changes, just tweaks of language.
70. The Director of Corporate Services thought it likely that Resources Committee would have sight of a lot of these conversations through the Staff Consultative Forum minutes. Signing up to the Charter as an organisation, if offered following the work undertaken, would come back to this Committee for sign off on behalf of the CNPA board.

## CONFIDENTIAL SESSION

### Commercial Opportunities (Paper 10)

1. The Director of Corporate Services introduced this paper which supports discussion by the Resources Committee on commercial opportunities which may now or in the future be accessible by the Cairngorms National Park Authority.
2. The Resources Committee is asked to:
  - a) Discuss the relative merits of the Authority pursuing commercial opportunities as part of its forward resourcing plans;
  - b) Consider what, if any, commercial opportunities may merit prioritising in any work being taken forward.
3. The Resources Committee were asked whether they had any thoughts or ideas on any new initiatives which could support this. However, consideration would need to be given to staff workloads and what work would have to slip to account for this.
4. Xander McDade, Convenor explained that it was evident that going forward that there would be increasing spending pressures across public sectors post Covid. Although we were not under the same sort of pressures that other organisations are, members were keen for the organisation to explore some form of income generation, whether this be in part or in whole and with charitable or private partners. This would be an opportunity to look at new areas of work which could for example support the Ranger Service.
5. Furthermore, there is a plan being developed around infrastructure and it does make sense to have these sorts of discussions now to allow for recognition of treatment of any income generated from infrastructure investment.
6. The Chair asked whether income generation is something other National Parks are involved in.
7. The Convenor explained that LLTNP generate income through car parks and some National Parks further south have moved into more commercial opportunities. Any initiative needs to fit with our organisational values and ideals, while also recognising that unlike other UK National Parks the Cairngorms NPA does not own any land or buildings.
8. A member thought sponsorship might be the way forward and would involve far less risk than operating something commercially. They wondered whether people have the right skills set to run something on a commercial basis.
9. A member felt that it was not the role of this Committee to come up with any ideas, this Committee was more about exploring ideas and agreeing to commit further work in support of those ideas which showed potential.
10. The Director of Corporate Services explained anything we do as a non-departmental government body needs to be understood by Scottish Government and may have ramifications for future grant in aid settlements. The Cairngorms Trust already fund raises to support initiatives that underpin the aims and objectives of the NPPP. He

also explained that there would have to be consideration given to the timeframe. Any initiative that is supported will have upfront costs and it may take some time before any income is generated.

11. In terms of grant and aid Scottish Government may take any income generation into consideration and reduce their grant accordingly.
12. The Convenor explained that this could be more about having the right opportunity at the right time. By supporting the Glenmore Trust in pulling a bid together to operate the campsite at Glenmore there could be an opportunity for a share in the revenue without having to run it. This is about using money the organisation is already spending in a clever way.
13. It is also about mitigating any spending cuts in the medium term and now is a good opportunity to explore ways of creating a bit of revenue, by working in partnership with others to support the work we normally do.
14. The Resources Committee were in favour of ongoing discussion and agreed the recommendations as set out in the paper.

## **AOB**

15. Concern had been raised at the Performance Committee meeting about the staff resource being stretched in the Peatland Action Team, particularly since the departure of the Peatland Action Manager. There is a concern that project delivery may be impacted if there is a staff shortage.
16. The Director of Corporate Services assured members that recruitment was ongoing to replace the Peatland Manager and provide additional resource within that Team to ensure sufficient capacity and that forward targets are achieved

## **Date of Next Meeting**

17. The Chair thanked members for attending.
18. The next scheduled Resources Committee meeting: date to be confirmed. A forward schedule of meetings to be circulated
19. The meeting finished at 17.00.