
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING **held in the Spey & Dee Meeting rooms,** **CNPA HQ, Grantown on Spey** **on Friday 6th December 2019 at 11.05am**

PRESENT

Xander McDade (Convener)	Willie McKenna
Geva Blackett (Deputy Convener)	Ian McLaren
Peter Argyle	Dr Fiona McLean
Carolyn Caddick	William Munro
Deirdre Falconer	Anne Rae Macdonald
Pippa Hadley	Dr Gaener Rodger
Janet Hunter	Derek Ross
John Kirk	Judith Webb
Douglas McAdam	Willie McKenna
Eleanor Mackintosh	

In Attendance:

Grant Moir, Chief Executive,
Dr Mike Rivington, James Hutton Institute, Items 1 to 7
David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services
Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning & Rural Development
Dr Peter Mayhew, Director of Conservation & Visitor Experience, Items 1 to 7 and Items 10 to 13.
Gavin Miles, Head of Planning & Communities Items 8 to 13
Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board

Apologies: John Latham

Welcome and Introduction

1. Xander McDade the Convener, welcomed everyone to the meeting in Grantown on Spey.
2. Apologies were noted from John Latham.

Declarations of Interest

3. Declarations of interest were invited. There were no interests declared.

Minutes of Last Meeting held on 20 September 2019 – for approval

4. The draft Minutes of the last meeting held on 20 September 2019 were agreed with no amendments.

Matters Arising

5. The Convener provided an update on the Action points from the previous minutes June to September 2019
 - a) 14th June 2019 Minutes - Action Point at Para 10 (i.)– **Closed** – Paper on response to climate change emergency on today's Agenda.
 - b) 16th August 2019 Minutes – Action Point at Para 19 (i) - **Closed** - Planning Policy Team finalised the formatting of the Schedule 4 documents.
 - c) 16th August 2019 Minutes – Action Point at Para 19 (ii) - **Closed** - Planning Policy Team finalised the compilation of the necessary core and supporting documents needed for the examination.
 - d) 16th August 2019 Minutes – Action Point at Para 19 (iii) - **Closed** - Planning Policy Team to submit Proposed LDP and all other material to Scottish Ministers for consideration.
 - e) 20th September 2019 Minutes – Action Point at Para 17 (i) - **In Hand** - Alister Bath to discuss his findings with the Board being arranged for February 2020.
 - f) 20th September 2019 Minutes – Action Point at Para 17 (ii.) – **Closed** – Copies of Resident and Visitor Survey's surrounding Carrbridge have been circulated to the Board.
 - g) 20th September 2019 Minutes – Action Point at Para 24 (i) –**Closed** – John Kirk to pass on contact for Young Farmers Group onto the CNPA Outdoor Learning Officer.
 - h) 20th September 2019 Minutes – Action Point at Para 30 (i) – **Closed** – Details of Audit & Risk Committee training on 14th November 2019 were circulated to the Board.

6. **Action Points Arising:** **None**

CEO Report & Convener Update (Paper I)

7. Grant Moir, Chief Executive, introduced Paper I which highlights the main strategic work streams that are being directed by Management Team. CEO explained that

these are areas where significant staff resources are being directed to deliver National Park Partnership Plan priorities. He highlighted the following area:

- a) Since the time of writing the paper the Scottish Government Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) had confirmed that the Local Development Plan Review would commence anytime from 31st December 2019. It was noted that this was on schedule and what had been anticipated.

8. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:

- a) Make It Yours training, was is possible for this to be organised for Board Members to undergo? CEO agreed to program a session in the New Year.
- b) Could assurance be provided that the Tomintoul & Glenlivet Landscape Partnership (TGLP) project would be completed on time and if not what the associated mitigation measures would be? The CEO advised that he was confident in the processes in place and that the TGLP Programme Board have the right team in place to do it. He acknowledged that there could be a few hiccups along the way but was assured that the right processes were in place to deal with any eventuality.
- c) With reference to the 2018 STEAM data could it be explained why there had been an increase in visitors in the shoulder months of April and September? The CEO explained that April and September were the months that the Authority & others had carried out promotional activity in a bid to expand the season but that this was also part of a wider trend in Scotland.
- d) Concern raised around the communication strategy and managing the public perceptions of the Carrbridge community element of the Capercaillie project. The CEO recognised that there were some very strong views being expressed in the Carrbridge element of the Capercaillie project. He acknowledged that there was significant volunteer time being put in by residents of Carrbridge to the Working Group. The survey had produced a statistically robust set of data and that overall people in Carrbridge wanted to do their bit to help ensure a healthy Capercaillie population. There is absolutely no truth in any rumours that the CNPA is looking at byelaws for Caper around Carrbridge.
- e) Comment made that the resident survey was too long and that not all of the village residents responded. CEO reported that the response rate from the village gave a 95% confidence rate which in statistical terms is very robust.
- f) Comment made that the other elements (such as habitat management) of the Capercaillie project were not as visible to the press, social media and general public and suggestion made to ensure better communication of the overall project going forward. This was agreed.

- g) With reference to the East Cairngorms Moorland project officer the funding was due to end in spring 2020 were there any plans to extend the post? CEO confirmed that the Estates had agreed to continue their funding and as a result of this the Authority would match the other 50% therefore the post would continue for another two years.
- h) With reference to meetings the CEO and Convener had with Roseanne Cunningham MSP and also with Mairi Gougeon MSP, could a flavour of the discussions be given? CEO advised that discussion had mainly been around net zero and what individual organisations were doing to meet the requirement.
- i) Assurance sought that In Kind funding for LEADER projects was being recorded. Director of Corporate Services confirmed that an ongoing record was being kept where in kind funding was disclosed in applications. Where this was not disclosed it would be more difficult to quantify. This aspect of programme investment would be considered further as the team head into the monitoring and evaluation phase.
- j) Query around snow generation being diesel powered and was there an ambition for net zero? CEO advised that Highland and Islands Enterprise (HIE) would be switching from diesel to biofuel from January 2020 but that their long term ambition was to switch to electricity.
- k) Concern raised that bringing Growbiz to the Cairngorms would risk treading on the toes of other organisations already working in the area. Director of Planning & Rural Development advised all would be explained under paper 3 on today's agenda.
- l) Concern raised with regards to the Deeside Way extension near Braemar and its planning consent would expire, had there been any discussions on this issue? The Convener advised that he had raised the issue to the Minister in October. The CEO added that he had also raised it in other meetings around funding for rural paths that were not community links paths.

9. The Board noted the Paper.

10. Action Point Arising:

- i. Make it Yours training session for Board Members in 2020 to be arranged.**
- ii. Communication of the overall project to be better coordinated to ensure that other elements of the project are also known and are being discussed.**

Cairngorms National Park Net Zero with Nature (Paper 2)

11. Grant Moir, Chief Executive introduced Paper 2 which looks at how the Cairngorms National Park and the CNPA responds to the challenges of the global climate emergency. Questions were invited:
- a) How do we ensure irreparable damage is not caused to rural communities?
CEO advised the need to start planning and having an evidence base, scoping the various options and working closely with the communities in the Park.
 - b) A Board Member commented that for Scottish Beef Efficiency Scheme it was a requirement to collect carbon figures and that this had been happening for the past two to three years. She advised she would like to see what was being done with the data collected. The CEO advised that he was unsure about this data but would find out.
 - c) Praise for the paper as a good starting point for the discussions, with recognition that the discussions surrounding the next National Park Partnership Plan and the Climate Change conference in March 2020 would both provide excellent opportunities on how to take net zero forward. Suggestion made to approach working with fragile communities with creativity and caution and a suggestion made to set up working groups at a National Park level as well as a National level. CEO advised that this was the first of a series of papers coming to the Board, the next ones being brought in June and December 2020. He added that he preferred the discussions to take place as a full Board as opposed to setting up a specific working group but happy to discuss.
 - d) Query around setting the global climate emergency as an overarching priority and what status this would be given against the statutory aims and a plea made to carefully articulate it. CEO advised that the statutory aims give a very clear approach to tackling the climate emergency in the National Park.
 - e) Concern raised on the effect this could have on rural communities and working with young people to ensure they are skilled in the right way that will be needed in the future. Comment made that volunteer positions are not attractive to young people and would not help to retain young people in the area.
 - f) Interest in what approach would be taken on a national context, would the National Park boundary be ring-fenced or would the National Park be expected to become the carbon sink for cities? CEO advised that there were interesting conversations looming around policy direction to determine what was urban Scotland's relationship with rural Scotland? He added that the peatland carbon code was also being put in place.
 - g) Recognition that there needed to be a balance, could assurance be provided that the transition commission have an understanding on equality and the rural

element? CEO agreed to find out more about the Just Transition Commission & report back to Board.

- h) Would the additional work this causes detract from the delivery of the work in the current National Park Partnership Plan? CEO advised that many of the things (e.g. woodland expansion, peatland restoration) are in the current NPPP and that it should not detract from existing priorities.
- i) With regards to the direct emissions as an organisation, the Authority must continue to deliver its emissions reductions targets in order to give a stronger position to justify the wider influencing work it planned to undertake on climate change. CEO agreed and advised the move to hybrid cars, use of biomass heating and the energy efficient building are all steps to making the organisation carbon efficient.
- j) Comment made that natural capital accounting would be of benefit in a rural area such as this.

12. He welcomed Dr Mike Rivington, author of the report (Annex 1) to this Paper who then gave a presentation.

13. The CEO added the following points:

- a) The Scottish Government's Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services Division (RESAS) commissioned the report on behalf of the CNPA. Going forward the CNPA needs to consider where to focus the Authority's funding on research and tap into other pieces of work being led by the Scottish Government.
- b) On the 22nd January 2020, a report detailing the impacts on private water supplies in Aberdeenshire will be published.
- c) He and Dr Mike Rivington would be attending an Aberdeenshire Council Climate Change event the following week.

14. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:

- a) A member advised that Aberdeenshire Council has more people on private water supplies than any other local authority in Scotland.
- b) Acknowledgement that the report meant that the future climate would be milder for the National Park yet the land management designations and features had been set years prior: would there be change in these designations? CEO agreed that this would be an issue which would require agreement from SNH and SG on what climate proofing designations would look like or if some features would need to change. He added that these discussions have begun.
- c) Would Cairngorm Mountain take the findings of this report into consideration especially at the critical stage of the creation of a masterplan? CEO agreed and

Cairngorms Economic Action Plan (Paper 3)

18. Gavin Miles, Head of Planning and Communities joined the meeting.
19. Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning & Rural Development introduced Paper 3 which presents the results of the consultation undertaken between June and September 2019 and seeks the Board's approval of the finalised Economic Action Plan 2019-2022.
20. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
 - a) Support for the Smart Village proposal, of which some members had come across the concept in Europe but not in Scotland.
 - b) Transport connectivity had been identified as a real issue in Deeside.
 - c) Comment made that currently the enterprise agencies do not provide support to micro-businesses. And if smart village proposal goes forwards, could reassurance be provided that the infrastructure was in place to continue that ongoing support? Director of Planning & Rural Development advised that he did think that Grantown-on-Spey, Ballater/ Braemar and Badenoch villages did possess the required digital capabilities/ coverage to accommodate the Growbiz model and they did seem to have the right people on the ground to take the project forward.
 - d) Could it be explained how the concern from land management businesses, having felt neglected, as part of the consultation process would be take forward? CEO advised that only one estate made that comment. Reassurance provided that the CNPA has significant contact with land management sector through individual contacts, CUAG, Cairngorms Nature and other mechanisms.
 - e) Had work been carried out on regionalising subsidies? Director of Planning & Rural Development explained that they would look to increase participation in natural capital over time encouraging them to take a role in it. CEO added that SNH had published a report on the natural capital of National Nature Reserve's (NNR) today and that staff were looking at that.
 - f) Query around housing stock and what to do with old housing, how that could be addressed and how to make use of stock in the National Park. CEO explained that it would be linked to Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) 4 guidance rather than through this piece of work.
 - g) Suggestion made that a Terms of Reference for the steering group is drawn up.
 - h) What resources would the steering group have? Director of Planning & Rural Development advised that the group itself would not have any resources but

that resources would be provided through his team and managed through normal corporate planning process.

- i) Comment made around the need to ensure reasonable achievements over the next few years. Director of Planning & Rural Development advised that the team had tried to ensure the actions can be progressed in a relatively short time with annual updates being provided to the Board.
- j) Could it be explained how the Tourism Action Plan (TAP) and the Economic Action Plan (EAP) interact without linking? Director of Planning & Rural Development advised that some of responses were more appropriate to the TAP so would be brought to the attention of that steering group.
- k) The Convener suggested that the Chair of TAP sits on EAP and vice versa to ensure linkages. This was agreed.
- l) Plea made to ensure working with the right people within communities, seeking help to identify these with locally elected members. Director of Planning & Rural Development confirmed that this had already happened.
- m) The point raised around Aviemore being the cultural capital of sport and not having seen it being picked up anywhere? Director of Planning & Rural Development said this point had been listened to and suggested this come back as part of future National Park Partnership Plan discussions.
- n) A member advised that he had attended the Scotland's Towns Conference recently and had been inspired by a case study in Cork County and recommended staff seek information on it.
- o) Director of Planning & Rural Development added that tomorrow was Small Business Saturday (promoted by the Federation of Small Businesses) and encouraged members and colleagues to shop locally.
- p) Director of Planning & Rural Development reported that positive conversations had taken place with active Business Associations in Kingussie, Ballater and Grantown.
- q) Suggestion made to provide feedback directly to consultees who submitted responses.
- r) The Convener advised the Board that if any members were interested in being involved in the Economic Steering Group to contact him directly following the meeting.

21. The Board:

- a) considered the feedback received during the consultation**
- b) approved the Cairngorms Economic Action Plan 2019 – 2022**

22. Action Points Arising:

- i. Future Chair of Economic Steering Group to sit on Tourism Action Group and vice versa to ensure linkages.**

- ii. **Board Members interested in becoming the Chair of the Economic Steering Group to make it known to the Board Convener following the meeting.**

Adoption of the Place Principle (Paper 4)

- 23. The Convener passed on to the Deputy Convener to convene the meeting for the next two papers.
- 24. Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning & Rural Development introduced Paper 4 which seeks the Board's endorsement of adopting the Place Principle.
- 25. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
 - a) Comment made that the place principle was not something new to the National Park; it was what the Authority did anyway and it worked successfully.
 - b) Comment made that Community Planning Partnerships use the Place Standard wheel very successfully.
 - c) Comment made that the Place Standard wheel was a good tool to promote conversations.
 - d) Overall it was considered that a place-based approach was very appropriate within the National Park and we had many good examples to share. Staff should encourage further such work to take this approach forwards.
- 26. **The Board agreed to adopt the Place Principle which states that:**
 - a) **We recognise that:**
 - i. **Place is where people, location and resources combine to create a sense of identity and purpose, and is at the heart of addressing the needs and realising the full potential of communities. Places are shaped by the way resources, services and assets are directed and used by the people who live in and invest in them.**
 - ii. **A more joined-up, collaborative, and participative approach to services, land and buildings, across all sectors within a place, enables better outcomes for everyone and increased opportunities for people and communities to shape their own lives.**
 - b) **The Principle requests that: All those responsible for providing services and looking after assets in a place need to work and plan together, and with local communities, to improve the lives of people,**

- d) Query around the KPI on staff turnover being 8%, the colour rating was illustrated as being green however the description had not been changed? Director of Corporate Services agreed this is a presentational error and advised the description would be changed to match the colour rating. The turnover rate is of a level higher than the acceptable maximum adopted within the organisational monitoring framework.
- e) With regards to peatland restoration concern raised at the lack of contractors. CEO advised that this was a capacity and timing issue across Scotland where restoration was constrained by the bird breeding season, deer stalking season, grouse season or by winter. . He added that funding is awarded on an annual basis and work can only be carried out 5 months of the year therefore the Authority have asked for funding over multiple years to enhance work planning rather than on a year on year basis.
- f) Praise for the number of people involved in community activity for the first time through LEADER being three times the target signified by the blue colour coding in Annex 2 – recognising that this corporate plan measure had now been met or exceeded.
- g) With reference to the Risk Register (Annex 3) could it be explained how long risks remain on the register after there was a down trend of green? Director of Corporate Services explained that normally discussion would take place between the Management Team and the Audit & Risk Committee (ARC). Risks that have been greyed out in the Strategic Risk Register are awaiting approval from the ARC to potentially remove those risks. Generally if the risk is rated as green for three cycles it is taken out but there are exceptions.
- h) Praise for the addition of large scale externally funded projects receiving continued support from the Authority over the period after closure into legacy delivery being detailed as a risk. Director of Corporate Services said he was pleased this had been picked up and commented that TGLP needed to agree management plans and legacy impacts – a process which he would continue to monitor.
- i) With reference to risk A14, what would it take to make it go amber in light of the capercaillie discussion? Director of Corporate Services agreed this was a good point to consider. He advised that while there had been strong views expressed in some quarters on the capercaillie project it was not thought considered to be enough to escalate any higher at this time in terms of the likelihood of negative elements of this conversation more widely impacting on the Authority's reputation. There were considered to be a large volume of positive aspects to coverage of both the capercaillie project itself and also wider work and achievements by the Authority at this time to justify not increasing the current risk assessment. CEO advised that the risk on the capercaillie project would be best placed in the risk categories focusing on service specific risks.

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37. The CEO reported that the Nature of Scotland awards had taken place two night ago and the Cairngorms National Park had three projects nominated. He announced that of the three nominated two had won their categories: Lynbreck Croft and Stewart Taylor's Aspen Work.

38. Action Point Arising: None.

Date of Next Meeting

39. Next formal Board meeting to be held on 27 March 2020, Dee & Spey Meeting rooms, CNPA HQ.

40. The Public part of this meeting concluded at 14.50