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## Cairngorm Advisory Group NOTE OF MEETING

14.00 – 15.15 Thursday 27 May 2021 Microsoft Teams



## Cairngorm Advisory Group 27 May 2021

## Note of virtual meeting

## Present

Bill Lobban	Convener, The Highland Council (Chairing this meeting)
Alistair Dodds	Chair Highlands and Islands Enterprise (Co-chair)
Peter Long	Aviemore Community Council
Uwe Stoneman	Abernethy Forest Estate (RSPB)
Duncan Swarbrick	Aviemore and Glenmore Community Trust
Mark Tate	Cairngorm Business Partnership
Lesley McKenna	Cairngorm Mountain Trust
Susan Smith	Cairngorm Mountain (Scotland) Ltd
Ruari Watt	Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland – Highland
Rachel Davies	Disability Snowsport UK
James Gibbs	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Paul Dzialdowski	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Elaine Hanton	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Douglas Cowan	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Chris Roberts	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
David Frew	Mar Lodge Estate (NTS)
David Black	MountaineeringScotland
Chris Donald	NatureScot
Johnnie Grant	Rothiemurchus Estate
Moira Langmuir	Scottish Ski Club
Euan Baxter	Snowsports Scotland
Shaun Roberts	Sports Scotland (Glenmore Lodge, Scottish Avalanche Information Service)
Grant Moir	The Cairngorms National Park Authority
Chris Taylor	VisitScotland
Karen Derrick	Voluntary Action Badenoch & Strathspey

	Item	Action
1	Welcome and introductions	
	Bill Lobban welcomed everyone to the meeting.	-
	Apologies had been received from Laura McNally, FLS, and Malcolm Macleod, THC.	
2	Terms of reference and membership	
	Douglas Cowan, HIE, thanked everyone for their interest and outlined the purpose of the Advisory Group, as described in the Terms of Reference.	-
	Members were invited to email Douglas with any comments, including views on the Terms of Reference and suggestions for group membership.	All

3	Discussion on local economy	
	James Gibbs introduced this session and invited contributions from Cairngorm Business Partnership, Aviemore and Glenmore Community Trust and VisitScotland.	
	Both CBP and AGCT reported survey work and anecdotal evidence indicating that, while businesses continue to face very significant challenges from the impacts of the pandemic, confidence appears to be growing, especially regarding the longer term.	
	All agreed that staff recruitment is the most serious issue hindering recovery and affecting the viability of local businesses at present, and that the key barrier is lack of affordable accommodation.	
	It was noted that several CAG members would be attending a meeting of the Highland Economic Recovery Partnership this afternoon, when Mark Tate was already intending to raise this topic.	
	<b>Action</b> : James Gibbs will follow up on discussion at the Economic Recovery Partnership.	James Gibbs
4	<ul> <li>Update from HIE:</li> <li>Masterplan</li> <li>Funicular</li> <li>Review of options for future operations</li> </ul>	
4.1	Masterplan	
	Paul Dzialdowski outlined key points included in the new Cairngorm Masterplan. This has been prepared by HIE, following extensive consultation, and is due to be published on the HIE website on Wednesday 2 June. HIE will issue a news release and send a link to the masterplan to stakeholders, including CAG members.	
	In response to questions, Paul confirmed that the masterplan did recognise the desire to create a sense of arrival to the whole Cairngorm Estate, and not only the ski area. He also stated that timescales to progress key actions were included in the masterplan and would be discussed at future meetings of the CAG.	
	<b>Action</b> : Anyone with further questions or comments on points raised in today's presentation or after the masterplan has been published is welcome to email <u>paul.dzialdowski@hient.co.uk</u> or <u>dave.macleod@hient.co.uk</u> to follow up.	All
	Shaun Roberts asked whether the masterplan had considered ways in which a broader range of local businesses, including sole traders, could be supported and sustained, for example through training opportunities or using space at Cairngorm. James Gibbs offered to explore this point.	

	<b>Action</b> : James Gibbs will invite interested parties, including HIE, Glenmore Lodge, CMSL, CBP and CNPA to meet and explore practical ways in which Cairngorm can benefit the local business community.	James Gibbs
4.2	Funicular	
	Paul Dzialdowski gave a brief update on progress with funicular strengthening works, including the roles of different organisations involved in delivering the contract. Despite challenges including some severe weather, works were progressing well and on schedule for completion as planned in winter 2021/22. As part of the contract, Balfour Beatty were also carrying out actions to deliver social benefits, including placements for two engineering students.	-
	Health and safety is paramount and construction traffic is being kept clear of all areas of public access. Some parking provision had been removed temporarily to enable traffic movements, including a helicopter landing zone, but disruption to visitors would be kept to a minimum.	
4.3	Review of options for future operations	
	Elaine Hanton introduced the subject of a review of future operating models at Cairngorm, noting that this was expected to be a recurring topic at CAG meetings. A list of underlying principles that HIE had prepared was shared.	
	In reviewing future arrangements, it would be important to learn lessons from what had worked, and not worked, in the past at Cairngorm and elsewhere. While there was a desire to attract private investment, it was essential that operations would be managed in ways that benefit the wider local economy.	
	<b>Action</b> : The next meeting of CAG will take a workshop approach, enabling members to influence the direction of travel.	Elaine Hanton
	Lesley McKenna suggested that socio-cultural impacts should be referenced specifically as one of the underlying principles. Elaine welcomed the suggestion, noting that this was a good example of the kind of feedback that HIE was seeking.	
5	Round table discussion	
	The Chair invited CAG members to raise questions or offer views, both on matters that had been discussed and any that had not.	
	In response to a question on whether it was planned for CAG members to receive the masterplan in advance of publication, Douglas Cowan explained that it had been decided to make the document available to all stakeholders at the same time. However, it was agreed that HIE would share the	

	proposed underlying principles document for the operating models review with CAG members. Action: HIE will email CAG members to invite comment on the underlying principles. Co-chair Alistair Dodds underlined the importance of HIE receiving feedback on its plans and actions at Cairngorm, and being willing to listen to advice. While the focus of this first meeting had been on scene-setting it was hoped that future sessions would be participative and he looked forward to working with all members. There were no further questions of comments, and the Chair invited members to email HIE if they wished to discuss any points. Nothing would be off the table.	Elaine Hanton
6	Date of next meeting	
	<b>Action</b> : Potential meeting dates will be circulated, with late August looking likely, depending on availability.	HIE

Chris Roberts 27 May 2021