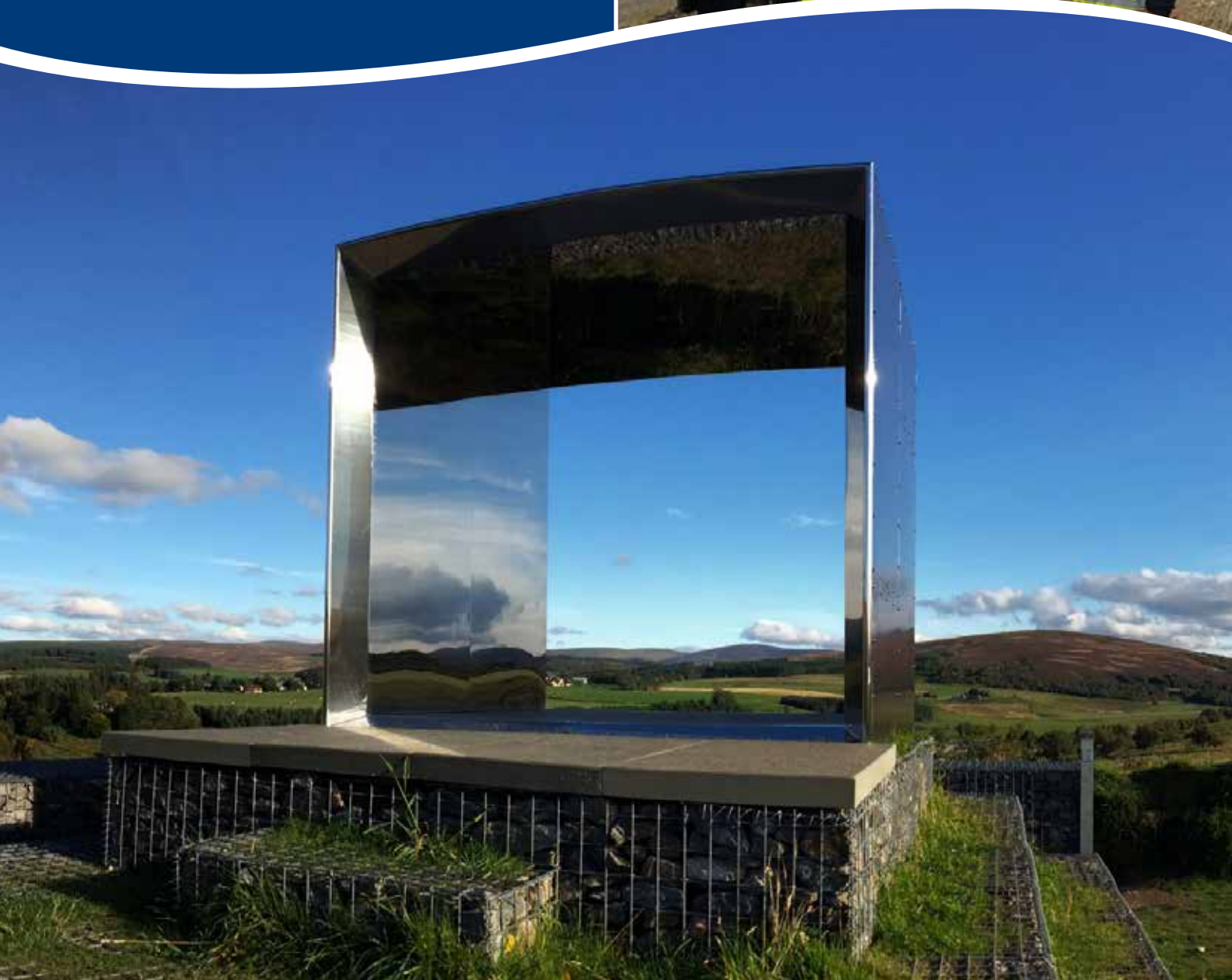


Cairngorms National Park Authority

Planning Performance Framework 2017-18



2017/18 – Performance Headlines

Development planning and land supply



Local Development Plan **3 yrs** old
Progress **on track** to replace it by 5th anniversary



6.1 yrs of effective housing land
296 new houses built over last 5 yrs



24 ha of marketable employment land available

Development management and decision making



91% of applications approved



Pre-application advice given
on **73%** of applications



Processing agreements for
91% of all applications



13.1 wks on average to
determine planning
applications for local
developments



2 legacy applications
remaining at end of year

Enforcement



76 enforcement cases taken up
52 breaches resolved

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Our Commitment

Our Planning Service is a key part of the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) and is committed to the Vision¹, Mission and Values as set out in the Corporate Plan 2015 to 2018. The Planning Service plays a key part in creating the Park we all want by getting the right development in the right place, by promoting investment, by protecting and enhancing the natural/cultural environment and by creating places that we will value and enjoy.

Read our Planning Service Charter for further information www.cairngorms.co.uk

¹ The Vision for the Cairngorms National Park is: "An outstanding National Park, enjoyed and valued by everyone, where nature and people thrive together".
Source: Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2017-2022

Introduction

The Planning Performance Framework (PPF) was developed by Heads of Planning Scotland in conjunction with the Scottish Government. The framework involves a mix of qualitative and quantitative measures to provide a toolkit to report on and improve performance. All planning authorities prepare PPF reports annually.

This is the seventh annual Planning Performance Framework report for the CNPA Planning Service. Scottish Government feedback about our last report for 2016/17 was generally positive. This report includes a summary of how we have performed in 2017/18 and looks ahead to 2018/19, highlighting the key areas where we want to further improve our practice. We use the PPF report to feed back to Scottish Government and to significant stakeholders including our Developers Forum and Planning Representatives Network (made up of Community Councils and Associations).

In the Cairngorms National Park, more than in any other part of Scotland, there is a partnership approach to planning – the National Park Authority and the five relevant local authorities all play a key role in making the planning system work efficiently.

The CNPA sets the planning policy for the National Park through the development of the National Park Partnership Plan and the Local Development Plan. All planning applications in the Park are determined with reference to this policy background. CNPA “calls in” and determines the most significant planning applications, generally around 10% of all applications, leaving the five local authorities to determine the remainder.

In the Cairngorms National Park, more than in any other part of Scotland, there is a partnership approach to planning – the National Park Authority and the five relevant local authorities all play a key role in making the planning system work efficiently



Part I: Qualitative Narrative and Case Studies



Braemar

Quality of outcomes

The CNPA has:

1. Undertaken further monitoring of the delivery of the [Local Development Plan](#) (LDP) and the associated suite of statutory and non-statutory [Planning Guidance](#) during the second year of their operation. This follows the Monitoring Report that was undertaken for the first year of the LDP's operation and continues to build our understanding of how planning policies are being applied in practice. This, in turn, helps to ensure our LDP and associated planning guidance is providing the policy framework and clarity necessary to secure high quality development on the ground. The monitoring work is being used to inform proposed policy changes in the next LDP.
2. Adopted a [Development Brief](#) for the HI housing allocation at Carr-Bridge. This adds to the existing suite of development briefs for key housing sites in the LDP. The HI allocation at Carr-Bridge is a significant development site and has a complex planning history. The Development Brief will provide a framework for ensuring high quality development on the site by providing guidance on site layout, design, open space integration and other general development requirements including the provision of a safe off-road route to the village primary school. These measures will ensure that the development is effectively integrated with the existing community.
3. Consulted on a Draft Development Brief for the Aviemore Highland Resort site. This site is centrally located in Aviemore and has significant development potential. Whilst part of the site has an extant planning permission for housing development, outline permission for the wider site has now lapsed. The LDP Action Programme identified the preparation of a Development Brief as a delivery priority to inform future development proposals for the site. The Development Brief aims to ensure that future development is carried out in an integrated and holistic way. The final

[Development Brief](#) was adopted in April 2018, just outside the monitoring period of this report.

4. Built upon the success of the [Cairngorms Design Awards 2016](#) competition (as reported in last year's PPF) by expanding the range of design resources on our website. We have developed an online '[Design Story Map](#)', which provides case studies of high quality design across the National Park. This enhances our existing suite of advice and guidance aimed at promoting the highest standard of design in the Park. The story map is intended to be a live resource, which will be updated with new case studies as and when they emerge.
5. Continued to utilise the [Cairngorms Landscape Toolkit](#) as a means of ensuring that development proposals complement and enhance the special landscape qualities of the National Park.
6. Supported the delivery of a range of high quality developments through the planning process. Selected highlights are identified within the Project Focus section of this report.



Design Awards Winner

Quality of service and engagement

The CNPA has:

1. Continued to promote our [Planning Service Charter](#) to outline the overall purpose of the planning service and our commitments to the service standards that customers can expect.
2. Maintained our good working relationships and shared understanding of different customer's experiences of the planning service through our Developers Forum and Planning Representatives Network (made up of representatives from Community Councils and Associations). We have undertaken a comprehensive review of both of these groups during 2017/18 to ensure they remain relevant, useful and effective for members.
3. Operated a [customer satisfaction survey](#) throughout 2017/18. The feedback from the survey is reported to CNPA's Management Team and is used to inform service improvements. A review of the survey approach was undertaken by Management Team in March 2018 and this has identified a future need for more directly targeted surveys of users of the development management service (both applicants and consultees). These new targeted surveys will be introduced during 2018/19 and the feedback received will be used to drive future service improvements. We will also be more active and dynamic in discussing the results of future customer feedback surveys with the Developers Forum and the Planning Representatives Network.

4. Offered processing agreements on all applications that are “called in” by CNPA and continued to promote the availability of this service via the CNPA website. Uptake of processing agreements has continued to grow during 2017/18, with 91% of the planning applications determined by CNPA during the reporting period having a processing agreement (this compares with the previous high of 88% during 2016/17). The agreed timescales were met on all of these applications.

5. Implemented our suite of [statutory and non-statutory Supplementary Guidance](#) as a means of providing clear guidance on the information that will be required in support of planning applications within the National Park. There is a separate piece of supplementary guidance or planning advice for each of the policies in the LDP. This provides advice on the information that is required to demonstrate compliance with the policy, with the information required being designed to be proportionate.

Each piece of supplementary guidance / planning advice includes a summary table of information requirements to allow developers to determine at-a-glance the information they will need to submit alongside their application. We have also published planning advice on the information required in relation to European Protected Species, as this is a key issue within the National Park. Again, this shows what information is required in a user friendly tabular format, with information requirements being designed to be proportionate to the size and nature of development.

6. Promoted the adopted LDP and associated Supplementary Guidance as the source of

information on developer contributions. The LDP has a clear policy on developer contributions (Policy 11) and statutory [Supplementary Guidance](#) supports this policy. The Supplementary Guidance refers to the Circular 3/2012 tests and makes clear that contributions will only be sought where the tests are met. The Supplementary Guidance includes a summary table to show contributions that are likely to be required for different types and scales of development, with these requirements being designed to ensure that obligations are proportionate.

We are also continuing to use the Cairngorms National Park [Planning Service Protocol](#) to ensure the policy is applied consistently by the CNPA and the five Local Authorities who deal with planning applications within the Park. Where relevant, developer contributions are highlighted during pre-application discussions, although in practice there are relatively few large developments in the Park that trigger the policy requirements.

7. Continued to promote our [Planning Enforcement Charter](#) to explain how the enforcement process works in the Cairngorms National Park and outline the respective roles of CNPA and the local authorities that share enforcement powers. We have also introduced a number of internal changes during 2017/18 to improve our ability to manage enforcement caseloads, changing procedures and moving our monitoring and enforcement data to the Uniform planning system. The [Planning Enforcement Register](#) has been refreshed with additional information and links to the most recent notices. The Enforcement Charter will be formally reviewed in 2018/19, but we have also

identified some additional specific areas of work that will improve our ability to deal with unauthorised hill track works in particular. We intend to add a new section to our planning web pages to allow people to report new or recent hill track works which the information officers need to investigate accurately. These improvements will be implemented during the early part of 2018/19.

8. Maintained our suite of [Planning Advice Notes](#) which explain the way the planning system operates within the National Park and provide easy to read advice on matters that customers frequently ask about.
9. Reviewed our [Development Plan Scheme \(DPS\)](#) to outline the timetable for producing the next LDP and set out our commitments to engaging the public and other stakeholders within its production. The DPS includes an overview of the project plan for the next LDP and demonstrates that robust project planning and management structures are in place to

ensure the delivery of the new LDP within 5 years of the adoption of the existing plan.

10. Completed an extensive programme of pre-Main Issues Report engagement to inform the MIR for the next LDP. The pre-MIR engagement built on the 'Call for Sites and Ideas' and the series of 'Community Council Walk Arounds' that were undertaken between November 2016 and March 2017 to identify potential development opportunities (as reported in last year's PPF). It included a series of informal discussions with Planning Committee Members as well as discussions with the Developers Forum and Planning Representatives Network to identify potential main issues for the next LDP. The emerging issues were then refined through further consultation with key stakeholders. Additional consultation with Community Councils was also undertaken to help identify locally specific issues. This cross-sectoral range of early engagement was used to inform the content of the MIR.



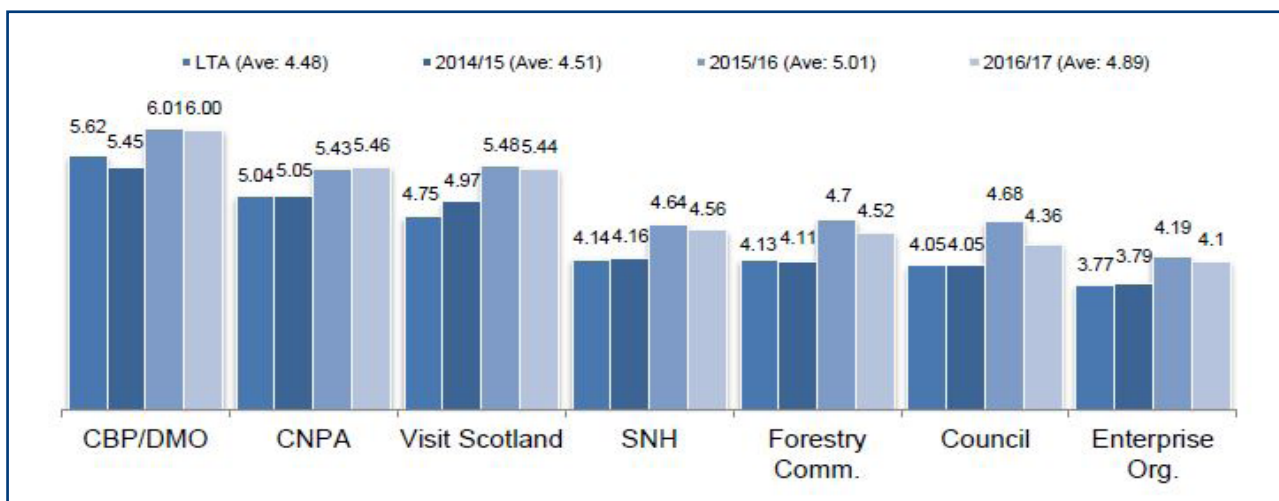
Aviemore Community Event for the Main Issues Report

11. Undertaken a successful consultation on the [MIR for the next LDP](#). The MIR consultation ran over a period of 15 weeks from 17 November 2017 to 2 March 2018. The consultation was designed to be as user-friendly and accessible as possible, and during this time more than 300 people attended MIR drop-in sessions and round table discussions in locations across the National Park. CNPA Officers also attended a range of Community Council meetings to explain the consultation, as well as holding MIR discussion sessions with the Developers Forum, the Cairngorms Business Partnership, and the Aviemore Business Association. Extensive use was made of the CNPA's website and social media to promote the consultation. The MIR webpage was viewed over 6,900 times during the consultation period and

104 posts were placed on Facebook and Twitter, with a combined total of over 3,000 users either clicking on information links, commenting, sharing/retweeting or 'liking' these posts. A total of 329 formal responses were received to the MIR consultation – this marked a significant increase from the consultation on the MIR for the current LDP, when 114 responses were submitted.

12. Maintained our strong reputation with local businesses, as evidenced by the regular survey work undertaken by the Cairngorms Business Partnership. CNPA is regarded by businesses as being generally effective in supporting business within the Park, especially compared to other public sector organisations, and performance is improving over time (see graph below).

Perceived contributions of organisations towards business in the Cairngorms National Park (scale of 1=very poor to 10=very good)

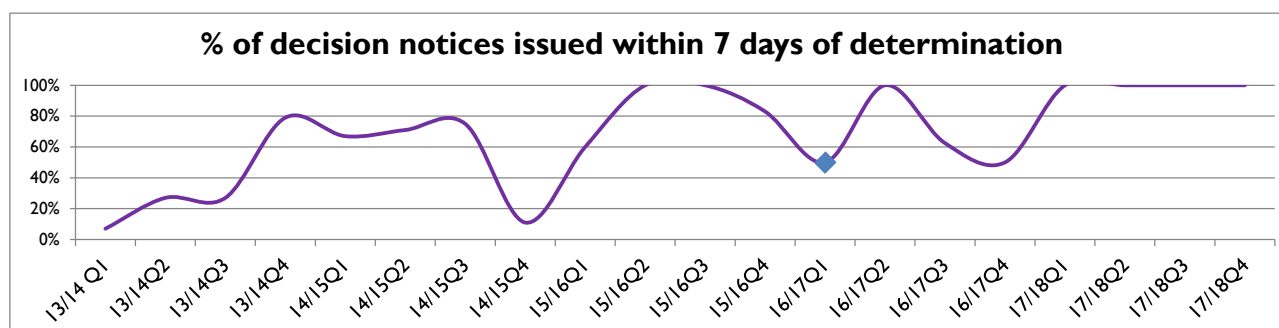


Source: [Cairngorms Business Barometer Annual Summary Report – June 2017](#)

Governance

The CNPA has:

1. Continued to apply the Cairngorms National Park [Planning Service Protocol](#) – the voluntary agreement between the CNPA and the five Local Authorities who all work together in the exercise of planning functions within and affecting the National Park. We have also convened regular Cairngorms Planning Protocol meetings with the five Local Authorities to provide a forum for discussing issues and ensuring the planning service is operating effectively and consistently across the Park.
2. Capitalised on a recent internal restructure which integrates CNPA's Economic Development and Community Support teams with the Planning team (as reported in last year's PPF). The Park Authority's previous Head of Planning role has been broadened to become the Head of Planning and Communities and now includes direct management oversight of all three functions. This is enabling much closer linkages to be made between the new LDP, the review of the Cairngorms Economic Strategy and the various Community Action Plans that are in place or under development across the Park.
3. Collaborated with key partners through our Planning Delivery Group (made up of senior managers from Highland Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Highlands and Island Enterprise, Forestry Commission Scotland, Transport Scotland and Scottish Water) to guide the preparation of the new LDP (including during the pre-MIR engagement activity – see comments above).
4. Continued to implement our [procedure](#) for reviewing applications post-determination where outstanding s75 legal agreements have delayed the issue of decision notices.
5. Maintained a pattern of issuing swift decision notices following planning committee meetings (where there are no requirements for s75 legal agreements to be concluded). The graph below shows that all such decision notices were issued within 7 days of committee determination during 2017/18.





Board visit to Deeside to view natural flood plain restoration

Culture of continuous improvement

The CNPA has:

1. Continued to use routine quarterly performance reporting to monitor performance at Management Team with six monthly updates for Planning Committee.
2. Continued to participate in the Heads of

“

The CNPA has introduced a range of service improvements during 2016/17, and agreed with the CNPA's planning committee a programme of further service improvements for 2017/18.

Planning Scotland's Development Planning and Development Management Sub-Committees.

3. Continued to participate in the North of Scotland Development Plans Forum, which allows the sharing of experiences, best practice, skills and knowledge amongst peers.
4. Introduced a range of service improvements during 2017/18 and agreed with the CNPA's Planning Committee a programme of further service improvements for 2018/19 (see Part 3 of this report for full details). The service improvements respond to feedback received from stakeholders, including through the National Park's Planning Representatives Network and Developers Forum, and aim to build upon the progress made in previous years.

Project Focus

Enhancing
the National
Park's Cultural
Heritage & Visitor
Experience



Braemar Heritage Centre under construction

Location and Dates

Braemar Heritage Centre, 2017/18

Related Elements of a High Quality Planning Service:

Quality of Outcomes

Key Markers:

2, 3

Key Areas of Work

- Design
- Conservation
- Economic Development
- Placemaking

Stakeholders

- General Public
- Local Developers
- Key Agencies
- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff

Overview

Highland games are a significant part of Scotland's cultural heritage dating back to medieval times and popularised by royal patronage of the Braemar Gathering, organised annually by the Braemar Royal Highland Charity (BRHC).

The BRHC aimed to create a new sustainable year-round heritage centre to enhance the visitor facilities at the Princess Royal and Duke of Fife Memorial Park in Braemar. The key objectives for the heritage centre were to display core heritage resources from the accumulated archives, artefacts, trophies and memorabilia relating to the Braemar Gathering, and to cater traditional Scottish food and drink to visitors and locals.

Planning permission had previously been granted for a Highland Games Centre in 2014 to fulfil a similar brief. However, this was for a larger two storey building of contemporary design and the BRHC later took the view that a more

economically viable scheme was needed.

From the onset of the design process, the intention was to create a heritage centre that is contextually appropriate amidst the setting of the Games Park, Braemar village and the surrounding natural environment.

Taking account of pre-application advice from both CNPA and Aberdeenshire Council, the revised proposal was sensitively designed to reflect the character of the traditional buildings within the Games Park and the Braemar Conservation Area. The palette of materials and finishes was also informed by both existing listed structures within the Games Park and traditional properties in the Conservation Area.

An application for planning permission was submitted in March 2017 and was subsequently called-in for determination by CNPA. The application was subject to a processing agreement. The high quality nature of the application, informed by the pre-application discussions, led to the application being unanimously supported by CNPA's Planning Committee. Planning permission was subsequently issued in July 2017, meeting the timescales of the processing agreement.

The development, which commenced in Autumn 2017, will provide a purpose built visitor centre and exhibition space that can be used throughout the year. It will enhance the existing Games Park and ensure it continues to make a major contribution to the character and economy of both Deeside and the National Park as a whole for many years to come.

Goals

To create an economically viable heritage centre that is contextually appropriate amidst the setting of the Games Park, Braemar village and the surrounding natural environment.

Outcomes

A purpose built visitor centre and exhibition space that can be used throughout the year and will enhance the existing Braemar Games Park.

Name of Key Officer:

David Allan, Planning Officer (Development Management)



Braemar Heritage Centre

Project Focus

Delivering High Quality Housing Development

Location and Dates

Beachan Court, Grantown-on-Spey, 2017/18

Related Elements of a High Quality Planning Service:

Quality of Outcomes

Key Markers:

2, 3

Key Areas of Work

- Design
- Conservation
- Economic Development
- Placemaking

Stakeholders

- General Public
- Local Developers
- Key Agencies
- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff

Overview

The Cairngorms Local Development Plan 2015 allocated land at Beachan Court, Grantown-on-Spey for housing development. A Development Brief was subsequently adopted to provide further detail on how the site should be developed.

In late 2016, planning permission was granted for the creation of plot layouts for 43 homes on the site as well as detailed proposals for 10 affordable homes. The consent also includes the road and path network, strategic landscaping and a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) for the whole development.

The construction of 10 affordable houses (comprising 6 semi-detached houses and 4 cottage flats) as part of the first phase of the development, which commenced during 2017/18, will make a significant contribution towards addressing local housing need as well as helping to meet the National Park's ambitious affordable housing targets (see further case study on affordable housing below).



The road and path network creates a permeable layout with good links for non-vehicular traffic into adjoining woodland areas as well as to the nearby town centre and surrounding housing areas.

The early approval of the strategic landscaping scheme for the whole site also enables this element of the development to be put in place in advance of housing delivery on the remainder of the site. This will help to ensure that the development is integrated within the surrounding area from the outset.

The first phase of development also includes an exemplar SuDS scheme which serves the

wholes development area. It comprises a series of swales leading into two attenuation ponds which have been designed to deal with surface water from the site. The ponds include capacity to retain water in periods of higher flows as well as maximising biodiversity benefits and protecting water quality. Maintenance arrangements for the SuDS scheme are provided through a condition on the planning permission.

Enhanced habitats are also being created for bat roosting and bird nesting by the provision of bat and bird boxes throughout the site.



Goals

To create a high quality development for a key housing allocation in the Local Development Plan.

Outcomes

A high quality housing scheme which delivers affordable housing and incorporates an exemplar SuDS scheme in the first phase of development and integrates well with the surrounding area and landscape.

Name of Key Officer:

Katherine Donnachie, Planning Officer
(Development Management)

Beachan Court SuDS and development under construction



Beachan Court under construction

Project Focus

Providing clarity on Developer Obligations



Aviemore Primary School

Location and Dates

National Park wide, 2017/18

Related Elements of a High Quality Planning Service:

Quality of Service and engagement

Key Markers:

3, 11, 12, 15

Key Areas of Work

- Local Development Plan and Supplementary Guidance
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Other (Developer Obligations)

Stakeholders

- Local Developers
- Key Agencies
- Authority Planning Staff

Overview

The Cairngorms Local Development Plan 2015 includes a clear policy on developer obligations (policy 11) and this is supported by statutory supplementary guidance.

Both the policy and supplementary guidance make specific reference to Circular 3/2012. The policy outlines the range of items for which developer contributions may be sought (including education, healthcare, sustainable travel etc), whilst the supplementary guidance provides additional clarity on the types and scales of development to which obligations are likely to apply. This provides clarity for developers on the contributions that may be required from their proposals.

Both the policy and supplementary guidance highlight that developer obligations will only be sought where the Circular's tests are met and that CNPA will not use planning obligations or other legal agreements where issues can

be resolved in another way, such as the use of planning conditions.

This provides a proportionate approach, in which obligations are only required where they are strictly necessary to enable development to take place.

Nevertheless, the developer obligations process can be complex because of the unique administrative arrangements within the National Park, which includes five different education and local roads authorities as well as healthcare service provision crossing NHS administrative regions. The instances in which planning obligations can be justified also varies significantly across the Park. For example, there are some settlements in the Park where school rolls are at or near to full capacity but other settlements in which school rolls are operating well below capacity. Similar situations exist in relation to other facilities such as healthcare, where existing facilities are likely to have capacity to absorb the additional demand created by new development in some areas but not others.

As a result, a service improvement priority was identified for 2017/18 to prepare additional advice on the implementation of the existing developer obligations policy. This was intended to provide clarity to officers and developers on the locations where developer obligations will / will not apply.

Detailed evidence was therefore gathered on the requirements for developer obligations in each of the settlements across the National Park, with a particular focus on education and health care contributions. This involved working in close liaison with service providers to understand the likely impact of planned development on existing services and infrastructure. This work has resulted in a much clearer understanding of which schools and health centres in the Park have the capacity to absorb planned development and which are likely to require

extension / upgrade.

The results of this work have been incorporated in the most recent update of the LDP's Action Programme, which now provides a much clearer position on the infrastructure and facilities that are likely to require extension / upgrade to accommodate the planned level of development in each settlement in the National Park.

This information therefore helps to provide clarity to developers and communities on where developer obligations will / will not be required. The information is also being used by planning officers to provide applicants with a clearer understanding of likely developer obligations during pre-application discussions so that requirements are defined from the outset of the development process.

As the Action Programme is updated on an annual basis, this information will also be kept under regular review. This will ensure that applicants will continue to be provided with regular, up-to-date and proportionate advice on developer contributions and that there is as much upfront certainty as possible on the instances where obligations will / will not apply within the National Park.

Goals

To provide clarity to developers and communities on where planning obligations will / will not be required from new developments.

Outcomes

Up-to-date and proportionate advice on developer obligations and upfront certainty on the instances where obligations will / will not apply within the National Park.

Name of Key Officer:

Katie Crerar, Planning Officer (Development Plans)

Project Focus

Early engagement on the New Local Development Plan

Location and Dates
Throughout the national Park during 2017/18
Related Elements of a High Quality Planning Service:
Quality of Service and Engagement
Key Markers:
8, 9, 10
Key Areas of Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Local Development Plan and Supplementary Guidance
Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none">General PublicHard to reach groupsLocal DevelopersKey AgenciesPlanning CommitteeAuthority Planning Staff

Overview

A significant amount of time and effort has been invested in the early stages of preparing the Cairngorms Local Development Plan 2020.

An extensive programme of pre-MIR engagement began during the early part of 2017, starting with a series of informal discussions with Planning Committee Members. These were used to examine the implementation of the current LDP, identify trends, and explore potential main issues for the new LDP. Similar discussions were also held with the Cairngorms Developers Forum and the Cairngorms Planning Representatives Network to provide

perspectives from different users of the planning system on the issues they felt the new LDP should address.

These early discussions led to the identification of 13 potential main issues for the LDP. A briefing note outlining these issues was subsequently prepared and subjected to further consultation with key stakeholders. Stakeholders were asked whether they agreed with the potential main issues and/or whether they felt any other issues needed to be addressed in the new LDP. In addition, all Community Councils within the National Park were asked for their views on the most important planning issues for their communities. The feedback from this further consultation was used to refine the main issues that were ultimately included in the Main Issues Report (MIR), which was formally published for public consultation between November 2017 and March 2018.

A 'Visioning Outcomes in Community Engagement' (VOiCE) report was prepared prior to undertaking the consultation on the MIR to ensure that the process was as inclusive as possible and met the National Standards for Community Engagement.

A programme of specific consultation events was undertaken to support the consultation process. Events were held in locations across the National Park and at different times of the day to enable as many people as possible to attend. All of the events included an informal 'drop-in' session as well as a more structured round table discussion focused on the place-based consultation questions in the MIR.

In addition, CNPA officers attended a range of Community Council meetings during the consultation period. CNPA officers also organised a discussion session on the MIR with the National Park Developers Forum, as well as attending discussion sessions with the Cairngorms Business Partnership and the Aviemore Business Association. In total over 300 people attended the consultation meetings and discussion sessions.

Extensive use was also made of the CNPA's website and social media to promote the consultation. The MIR webpage was viewed extensively, with 6,900 visits being recorded during the consultation period. 104 posts were also placed on Facebook and Twitter, with a combined total of over 3,000 users either clicking on information links, commenting, sharing/re-tweeting or 'liking' these posts.

Finally, a series of newsletter articles and press releases were used to raise awareness of the consultation. The MIR was featured in three Cairngorms monthly newsletters during the consultation period, with each of these being distributed to a mailing list of over 1,300 recipients.

A total of 329 responses were received to the MIR consultation from a range of organisations and private individuals. This marked a significant increase from the consultation on the MIR for the current LDP, when 114 responses were submitted. The responses are now being

considered in detail and will provide a positive basis from which to prepare the Proposed LDP.

Goals

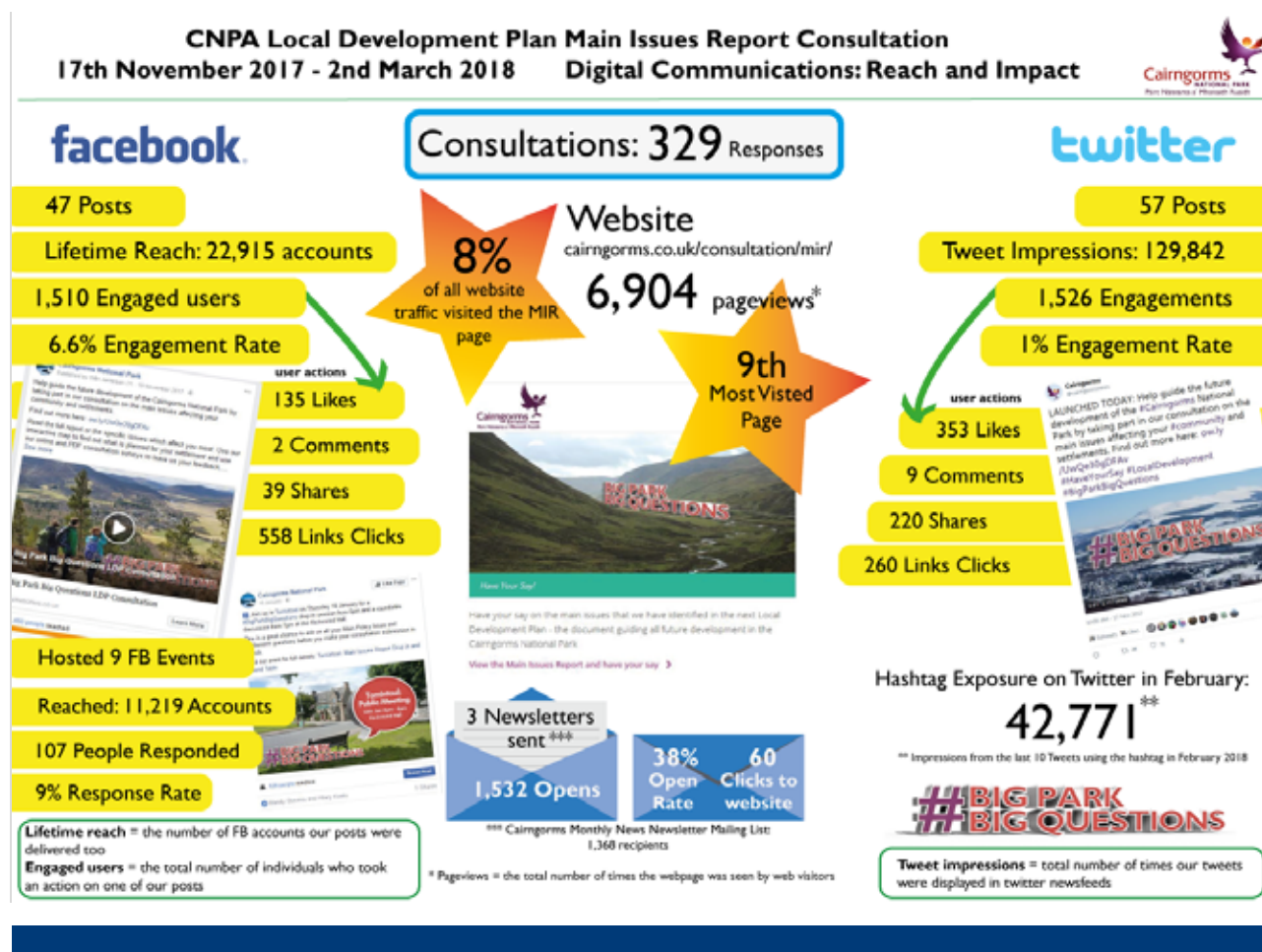
To undertake comprehensive early engagement to inform the preparation of the Cairngorms Local Development Plan 2020.

Outcomes

Consultation responses from a wide range of organisations and private individuals which provides a positive basis from which to prepare the Proposed Local Development Plan.

Name of Key Officer:

David Berry, Planning Manager (Forward Planning & Service Improvement)



Project Focus

Flexibility and Innovation in Delivering Affordable Housing



Dulnain Bridge

Location and Dates

Locations across the National Park

Related Elements of a High Quality Planning Service:

Quality of outcomes, Culture of continuous Improvement

Key Markers:

1, 3

Key Areas of Work

- Housing Supply
- Affordable Housing
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Skills Sharing

Stakeholders

- Local Developers
- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff

Overview

It is hard for many households that work within the National Park to access housing on the open market. This is primarily because average incomes are relatively low and house prices are high. Affordability pressures are also exacerbated by the fact that second home ownership in the National Park is significantly higher than the national average (around 12% of all houses within the Park are second homes).

Ensuring that as many new homes as possible are affordable to people working in the Park is therefore a key priority for CNPA and its partners. The recently approved Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2017 sets an ambitious target of delivering 200 new affordable houses during the 5 year period to 2021. 2017/18 has seen further progress in exploring flexible and innovative ways of delivering affordable housing to meet this target.



In February 2018, full planning permission was granted for the erection of 6 affordable houses on a vacant site at Dellmhor, Inverdrurie. The site had been granted planning permission for 5 affordable houses in 2005, but this earlier permission proved not to be viable and the site had remained vacant and undeveloped in the meantime.

The new development will involve the construction of 4 semi-detached houses and 2 detached bungalows, all of which will be managed and operated by Albyn Housing Society. The buildings are of a modular/pre-fabricated design and will be constructed off-site. This has helped to manage construction costs, thereby making it possible to deliver a 100% affordable housing scheme on this otherwise financially marginal site.

Despite the scheme's tight budget, the development achieves a high quality contemporary design, with the layout, materials and roof design

all being revised through negotiation during the planning process to ensure it reflects the character of the surrounding area and landscape.

In March 2018, the CNPA's Planning Committee also granted full planning permission for a development of 8 two bedroomed houses on a vacant brownfield site in Blair Atholl. The houses are being developed by Atholl Estates with the aid of the Scottish Government's Rural Housing Fund. All of the homes are intended to be rented out as affordable housing to local residents and Estate workers. The development will comply with the terms of the fund, which seek to ensure that rent levels provide affordable accommodation, equating to what is generally known as intermediate or mid-market rent.

The site is located within the Blair Atholl Conservation Area and the development has therefore been sensitively designed to respect the character of its surroundings, involving the use of high quality design, materials and finishes.



Dellmor housing by Albyn Housing Society Ltd 2016/0434/DET



Blair Atholl houses by Denholm Partnership Architects (App: 2017/0264/DET)

This project demonstrates the way in which stakeholders other than Local Authorities and Housing Associations are working together to deliver affordable housing developments for the benefit of local residents and workers.

Finally, the National Park Partnership Plan 2017 includes an aim to support the delivery of community-led housing solutions, including by helping communities to make the most of powers to buy land and take a more pro-active role in the management of housing.

CNPA officers are currently working with the Dulnain Bridge Community Council to explore options for delivering a community-led affordable housing development within their village.

A Community Development Trust has been established and potential development sites have been identified. The CNPA's Community Support Manager is working alongside the Development Trust to help identify potential funding sources and navigate through the development process.

It is hoped that this project will act as a pilot for other future community-led housing initiatives within the National Park.

Goals

To explore flexible ways of increasing the supply of affordable housing within the National Park

Outcomes

A range of schemes, using different delivery methods, that will help to meet the National Park's ambitious target to deliver 200 new affordable houses during the 5 year period to 2021

Name of Key Officer:

David Berry, Planning Manager (Forward Planning & Service Improvement)

Part 2: Supporting Evidence

Part I of this report was compiled drawing on evidence from the following sources:

Cairngorms Business Barometer

www.visitcairngorms.com/barometer

Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan

www.cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/LDPI5.pdf

Cairngorms Design Advice

www.cairngorms.co.uk/park-authority/planning/good-design

Cairngorms Landscape Toolkit

www.cairngorms.co.uk/landscape-toolkit

Cairngorms Planning Service Charter

www.cairngorms.co.uk/resource/docs/publications/30042015/CNPA.Paper.1966.Planning%20Service%20Charter.pdf

Cairngorms Planning Advice Notes

www.cairngorms.co.uk/authority/publication/341/

Planning Service Performance Reports to Planning Committee

- May 2017

<http://cairngorms.co.uk/resource/docs/boardpapers/26052017/Item7PlanningServicePerformance.pdf>

- December 2017

<http://cairngorms.co.uk/resource/docs/boardpapers/15122017/Item9PlanningServicePerformanceUpdateV1.0.pdf>

- May 2018

<http://cairngorms.co.uk/resource/docs/boardpapers/25052018/Item7PlanningServicePerformanceUpdate.pdf>

Checklist for Part 2 - Qualitative Narrative and Case Studies:

Case Study Topics	Issue covered in PPF7	Case Study Topics	Issue covered in PPF7
Design	Y	Interdisciplinary Working	Y
Conservation	Y	Collaborative Working	Y
Regeneration		Community Engagement	Y
Environment	Y	Placemaking	Y
Greenspace		Charettes	
Town Centres		Place Standard	
Masterplanning		Performance Monitoring	
LDP & Supplementary Guidance	Y	Process Improvement	
Housing Supply	Y	Project Management	
Affordable Housing	Y	Skills Sharing	Y
Economic Development	Y	Staff Training	
Enforcement		Online Systems	
Development Management Processes		Transport	
Planning Applications		Active Travel	
Other (Developer obligations)	Y		



Part 3: Service Improvements

During 2018/19 the CNPA will:

1. Simplify mechanisms for securing planning obligations and reduce the need for planning agreements – Establishing simpler, cheaper and faster ways of securing necessary planning obligations
2. Develop and deliver a schools engagement / involvement programme – As part of the CNPA's approach to involving young people during the year of young people
3. Plan and deliver a workshop on natural heritage with SNH, SEPA and Local Authorities – Sharing good practice and ensuring consistent application of policy and practice across the National Park
4. Increase participation and engagement in the consultation on the proposed Local Development Plan – Using what we have learnt from recent consultations to increase informed comment on important issues
5. Consolidate past improvements and procedures – For the past two years, the planning team has set ambitious service improvement priorities. At a time when we have also recruited a number of new staff, embedding changes requires consistent work and effort. We think that there is more work to do to gain the full benefit of the past years' service priorities such as our Planning Committee training programme, approach to monitoring and enforcement activity, using our new customer feedback processes etc
6. Explore efficiencies in delivery of the CNPA's planning monitoring and enforcement role and outdoor access authority roles – There are clear comparisons between some of the work of the planning team and outdoor access teams and this work will explore whether shared systems or procedures can create efficiencies in cost or time

The identified service improvements aim to respond to feedback received from stakeholders, including through the National Park's Planning Representatives Network and the Developers Forum. The priorities will build upon progress that has been made in previous years.

Delivery of CNPA service improvement actions in 2017-18

Committed Actions and Improvements	Complete
<p>Develop a series of standard planning conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The team have developed a set of standard conditions and standard informative notes based on frequent issues and mechanisms for ensuring conditions meet the necessary tests. These will be used as the starting point for all conditions and kept under review.</i> 	Yes
<p>Prepare and implement standard legal agreement templates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>This priority has proved difficult to progress successfully. Legal agreements have proved more difficult to conclude because of the involvement of both CNPA and local authorities. The priority will be carried forward to 2018/19 with an objective of service level agreements between CNPA and local authorities that allows the CNPA to collect planning obligations that will then be passed to a local authority. Were possible, we want to remove the need for a legal agreement or remove the requirement for a local authority to be a signatory to a legal agreement.</i> 	Partially Complete
<p>Consolidate delegated authority provisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Delegated authority provisions reviewed and additional delegation for enforcement notices agreed by Planning Committee</i> 	Yes
<p>Continue to deliver our Planning Committee training programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>2017/18 sessions held on:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Three separate sessions on Main Issues for Local Development Plan</i> <i>Hill tracks and enforcement</i> <i>Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)</i> <i>Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA)</i> <i>Site Visit to Highland Folk Museum</i> <i>Site visit to Cairngorm Mountain to view restoration works</i> <i>Site visit to Ballater Royal Station refurbishment</i> 	Yes
<p>Prepare additional advice on the LDP's developer obligations policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Detailed evidence gathered on the requirements for obligations towards education and health care across the Park. This is now used internally by planning officers and will be incorporated in the annual update of the Local Development Plan Action Programme in June 2018 to provide further clarity for applicants.</i> 	Yes
<p>Develop and deliver a schools engagement / involvement programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>This work is part of the CNPA's wider corporate approach to working with schools and young people. Timetabling difficulties delayed further school participation at a Planning Committee but the work will continue to 2018/19.</i> 	Partially Complete

<p>Enhance our customer feedback process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Review undertaken of all feedback received to date via the existing online customer survey. Revised customer feedback process designed and agreed with Management Team. Revised feedback process to include more targeted surveys with recent applicants and consultees and will be launched during early 2018/19. Feedback received via revised process to be discussed with Developers Forum and Planning Representatives Network and shared externally through regular Planning Service Newsletter.</i> 	Yes
<p>Plan and deliver a workshop on natural heritage with SNH, SEPA and Local Authorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Workshop postponed in 2017/18 due to changes in staff. Will be delivered in 2018/19.</i> 	Planning underway
<p>Develop further materials to raise awareness, understanding and expectations of good design in the Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Case studies of good design within the Park made available on CNPA website via new 'storymap' mapping system. This system can be maintained and updated with new examples of good practice as they emerge. The images from the design awards have also been used in promotional material about the National Park and the planning system.</i> 	Yes
<p>Review the way we report monitoring and enforcement activity in public</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Overview of annual monitoring and enforcement activity presented to Planning Committee in December 2017. Future update reports to be presented to Committee on biannual basis in May and December each year. New enforcement page for CNPA website currently under preparation. This will be launched in early 2018/19 and will incorporate information on how to report suspected breaches of planning control, including a new hill track reporting facility.</i> 	Yes
<p>Undertake a review of current community and developer engagement processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>There was strong support from both Planning Representatives Network and Developers Forum members for the continuation of each forum in a similar format. The CNPA planning team will use both forums for more focussed advice and feedback over the next year.</i> 	Yes

Part 4: National Headline Indicators

Key outcomes	2017 - 2018	2016 - 2017
Development Planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age of local development plan (years and months) at end of reporting period. Will the local / strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme? (Y/N) Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year? (Y-earlier/Y-later/N) Were development plan scheme engagement / consultation commitments met during the year? (Y/N) 	3y, 0m Y Y (later) Y	2y, 0m Y Y (later) Y
Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established housing land supply 5-year effective housing land supply programming 5-year effective land supply total capacity 5-year housing supply target 5-year effective housing land supply Housing approvals Housing completions over the last 5 years Marketable employment land supply Employment land take-up during reporting year 	2,827 units 753 units 2802 units 615 units 6.1 years 116 units 296 units 24 ha Not available	2,581 units 652 units - 640 units 5.1 years 182 units 326 units 24 ha Not available
Development Management Project Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage and number of applications subject to pre-application advice Percentage and number of major applications subject to processing agreement Decision-making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application approval rate Delegation rate Percentage of applications valid upon receipt 	73% (8) N/A* 91% 0% N/A**	50% (14) 100% (2) 100% 0% N/A

*No major applications determined during the reporting period.

**Planning applications within the National Park are initially submitted to and validated by local authorities.

Decision-making Timescales Average number of weeks to decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major developments Local developments (non-householder) Householder developments 		
	N/A	N/A
	13.1	70.9
	N/A	N/A
Legacy Cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number cleared during reporting period Number remaining 	3	4
	2	0
Enforcement Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time since enforcement charter published / reviewed (months) Complaints lodged and investigated Breaches identified - no further action taken Cases closed Notices served Direct action Reports to Procurator Fiscal Prosecutions 	23 months	11 months
	76	69
	50	69
	52	36
	3	1
	0	-
	0	0
	0	0
	0	0



Context Statement Development Planning



Ballater

Work this year has continued to focus on delivering the plan strategy of the Cairngorms Local Development Plan 2015 and on producing additional planning guidance for key development sites.

The LDP Action Programme is being viewed as a 'live' document and has been updated throughout 2017/18. The statutory two year Action Programme Update was published in June 2017, and we aim to publish further updates on at least an annual basis. The June 2017 Action Programme Update included the results of a full review of infrastructure requirements for allocated development sites, which was undertaken during the course of the year. This work has improved our understanding of site effectiveness and expected delivery rates, which supports CNPA's focus on maintaining an appropriate supply of effective housing land throughout the lifetime of the LDP. We now have a more realistic delivery programme for LDP site

allocations, and a 5 year effective land supply remains in place.

2017/18 also saw the adoption of a Development Brief for a key housing allocation in Carr-Bridge and consultation on a Draft Development Brief for the Aviemore Highland Resort site. This work will help to provide more certainty for both the site developers and local residents about how these sites should be developed.

The NHI statistics show that housing approvals have dropped slightly this year, however this does not include a number of large applications where during 2017/18 the Planning Committee resolved to grant planning permission subject to a section 75 agreement being concluded. A significant increase in housing approvals can therefore be expected in next year's PPF report as the section 75 agreements are concluded on these sites. 5 year housing completions have remained relatively stable at just below 300 units.

Aside from delivering the current LDP, CNPA also made significant progress in preparing the next LDP during 2017/18. An extensive programme of pre-MIR engagement was concluded during the early part of the reporting period, and a successful consultation on the MIR was undertaken over a 15 week period from November 2017 to March 2018. Work will now focus on summarising the MIR responses and using these to inform the preparation of the Proposed Local Development, which is expected to be published in late 2018.

An updated DPS has been published. This has amended the date for submission of the next LDP to Scottish Ministers in order to allow more time to take into account emerging good practice and other relevant information from the ongoing review of the Scottish planning system. However, the revised timetable continues to ensure that the new LDP will be in place within 5 years of the adoption of the current LDP. The updated DPS also includes a summary of the overall project plan for the new LDP and demonstrates that robust project plans and management systems are in place to ensure the timely delivery of the new plan.



Carr-Bridge

Context Statement Development Management



Board visit to the Fife Arms Hotel renovation in Braemar

In 2017/18 CNPA called in 23 planning applications and determined 11 applications. This is broadly similar to the number of applications that were called in during 2016/17 (26) and 2015/16 (24). It compares with 41 applications that were called in during 2014/15. Call-ins have therefore now been maintained at a lower level for three consecutive years, reflecting the refinement of our call-in criteria in December 2015. This trend demonstrates

“

Call-ins have now been maintained at a lower level for three consecutive years, reflecting the refinement of our call-in criteria in December 2015

that CNPA is continuing to call in only those applications that raise issues of particular significance to the overall aims of the Park.

The CNPA's comprehensive use of processing agreements continues to be a good way to provide certainty for applicants and CNPA officers. Processing agreements are offered on all applications that CNPA calls in, and their availability is promoted via the CNPA website. The rate of uptake has continued to grow during the course of the reporting period, with 91% of all applications determined by CNPA during 2017/18 having processing agreements*. The agreed timescales were met on all of these cases, and the average time for determining applications with a processing agreement during 2017/18 was 43 weeks.

** This figure includes all applications and therefore differs from the NHI figure in the table, which only includes major developments.*

Overall processing timescales for applications determined by the CNPA tend to be longer than the national average for a number of reasons. In particular, as the CNPA only calls in applications that raise issues of significance to the overall aims of the Park, it does not deal with the simpler cases such as the majority of householder applications. Processing timescales are also affected by the fact that all applications that are called in are determined by Planning Committee, which meets monthly. In addition, the fact that CNPA deals with relatively low numbers of applications overall means that average determination timescales can be easily skewed by the time taken to determine one or two particularly complex applications.

These issues have been acknowledged in the annual national publication of statistics, which notes that:

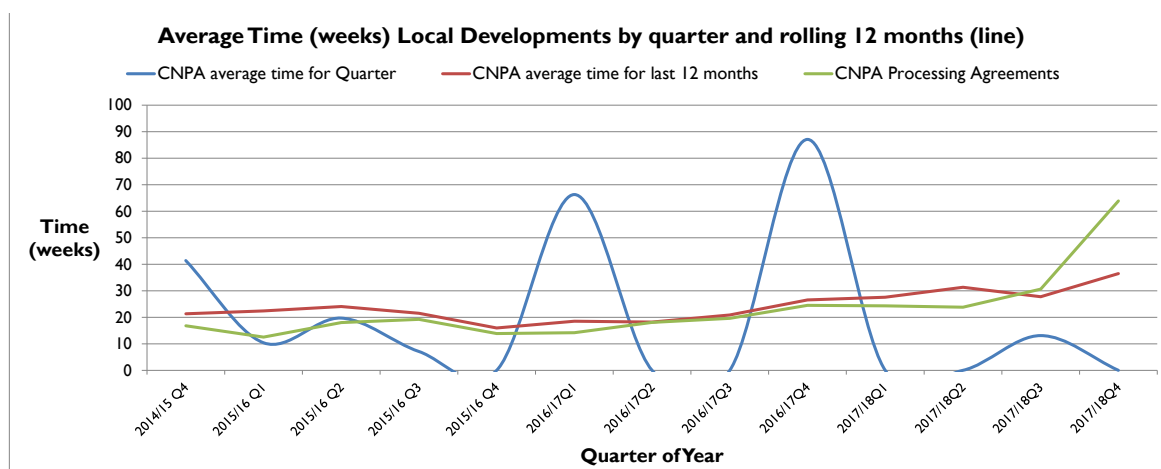
“It should be expected that Cairngorms has a longer average decision time as they do not receive planning applications directly but are notified of applications which have been made to those planning authorities within the National Park boundaries. Cairngorms National Park may then decide to call applications in for their determination. Planning applications are likely to have already been in the system for

a number of weeks before being transferred to Cairngorms National Park. In addition, Cairngorms National Park have no householder applications in their case mix for 2017/18. For these reasons average times for Cairngorms National Park applications can be expected to be higher than those of the other planning authorities. In 2017/18 Cairngorms National Park made decisions for a further 10 local applications using processing agreements all of these meeting agreed timescales.”

Source: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00538508.pdf>

As a result of the above issues, a recent internal audit of CNPA’s planning service recommended that CNPA use a rolling annual average indicator for internal service performance monitoring. In simple terms, if quarterly average determination times are below the rolling annual average figure then performance is improving.

The graph below shows that CNPA’s quarterly average determination time for local developments with processing agreements was below the rolling annual average for the first half of 2017/18, demonstrating improved overall performance in comparison with the previous year.



The sharp increase in determination times for applications with processing agreements during quarter 4 was the result of the conclusion of a small number of complex applications (although the processing agreement timescales were still met for these applications). As referenced in the national headline indicators, timescales for determining applications without processing agreements have seen a significant improvement since last year.

Although the use of processing agreements has been an effective way of managing cases and providing certainty for applicants as well as the CNPA, there is a trend of processing timescales extending over time within processing agreements. This has generally been because applicants seek extensions of time from the original agreement in order to provide the information needed to determine their applications.

There are many cases where this is justified but there are also cases where it unnecessarily extends the determination process because the applicant has not prepared for the planning process. We are continuing to look at ways of

drawing such applications to a faster conclusion and [revised processes](#) to help achieve this objective were reported to Planning Committee in February 2018. These processes will begin to take effect during 2018/19.

We are pleased that the proportion of applications subject to pre-application advice has increased to 73% of all applications. This compares with 50% of applications in 2016/17 and reflects the ongoing application of our [Planning Advice Note on Pre-Application Advice](#) in the Cairngorms National Park, which helps to provide clarity on the pre-application advice service which is shared with the five constituent local authorities. Our suite of [statutory and non-statutory Planning Guidance](#) also provides clarity on the information that requires to be submitted in support of planning applications.

Enforcement activity continues to be a priority, with some 52 cases being closed / resolved during 2017/18 – a significant increase from 2016/17 levels.



New Care Home in Grantown under construction

Part 5: Official Statistics

A: Decision-making timescales (based on 'all applications' timescales)

Category	Total number of decisions 2017-18	Average timescales (weeks)	
		2017-2018	2016-2017
Major developments	0	-	-
Local developments (non-householder)	1	13.1	70.8
• Local: less than 2 months	0 (0%)	-	-
• Local: more than 2 months	1 (100%)	13.1	70.8
Householder developments	0	-	-
• Local: less than 2 months	0 (0%)	-	-
• Local: more than 2 months	0 (0%)	-	-
Housing developments			
Major	0	-	-
Local housing developments	0	-	54.4
• Local: less than 2 months	0 (0%)	-	-
• Local: more than 2 months	0 (0%)	-	54.4
Business and industry			
Major	0	-	-
Local business and industry	0	-	-
• Local: less than 2 months	0 (0%)	-	-
• Local: more than 2 months	0 (0%)	-	-
EIA developments	0	-	-
Other consents*	0	-	-
Planning/legal agreements**	0	-	70.8
• Major: average time	0	-	-
• Local: average time	0	-	70.8

*Consents and certificates: Listed buildings and Conservation area consents, Control of Advertisement consents, Hazardous Substances consents, Established Use Certificates, certificates of lawfulness of existing use or development, notification on overhead electricity lines, notifications and directions under GPDO Parts 6 & relating to agricultural and forestry development and applications for prior approval by Coal Authority or licensed operator under classes 60 & 62 of the GPDO.

** Legal obligations associated with a planning permission; concluded under section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 or section 69 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

B: Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

Type	Total number of decisions	Original decision upheld			
		2017-2018		2016 - 2017	
		No	%	No	%
Local Reviews	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	0	0	0	0	0

C: Context

Official decision-making timescales show a significant improvement in 2017/18 (13.1 weeks average) compared with 2016/17 (70.8 weeks average), although it should be noted that the statistics can be easily skewed as a result of the low numbers of applications in the CNPA's overall case mix.



Part 6: Workforce Information

The workforce information below represents a snapshot of the position within CNPA's planning service at 31 March 2018.

Category	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Head of Planning Service			✓	

Note: Tier 1= Chief Executive, Tier 2= Directors, Tier 3= Heads of Service, Tier 4= Managers

RTPI qualified staff	Headcount	FTE
Development Management	5	4.2
Development Planning	4	4
Enforcement	1	1
Specialists	0	0
Other (including staff not RTPI eligible)	2	2

Note: Managers are those staff responsible for the operational management of a team/division. They are not necessarily line managers.

Staff Age Profile	Number
Under 30	2
30 - 39	3
40-49	5
Over 50	2

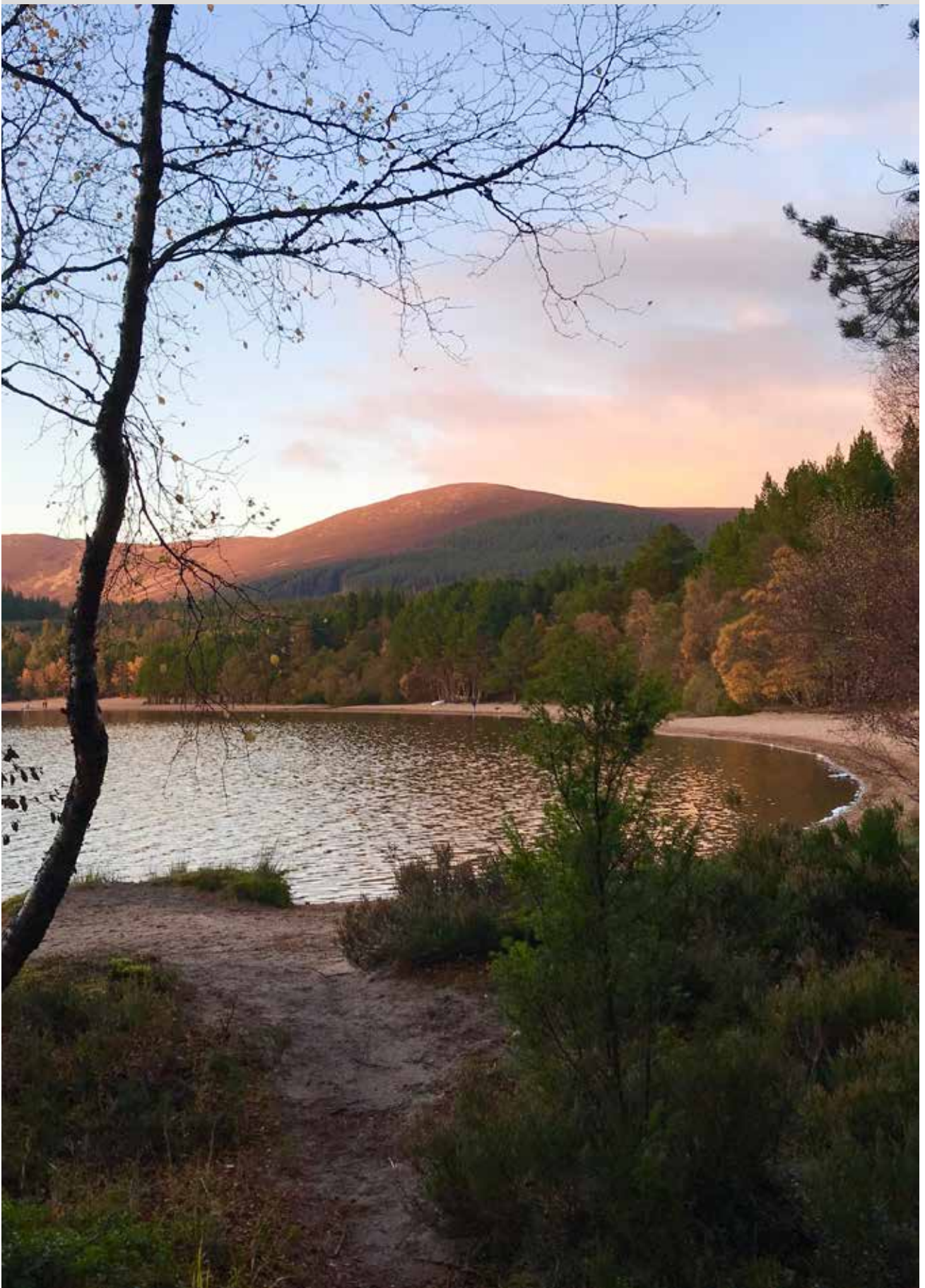
Part 7: Committee Information

Committee and Site Visits*	Number per year
Full Board Meetings	6
Planning committees	11
Area committees (where relevant)	N/A
Committee site visits	1
LRB**	N/A
LRB site visits	N/A

Notes:

**References to committees also include the Cairngorms National Park Authority Board. Number of site visits is those cases where visits were carried out by committees/boards.*

***This relates to the number of meetings of the LRB. The number of applications going to LRB are reported elsewhere.*



Cairngorms National Park Authority

Planning Performance Framework 2017-18

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