

## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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### FOR INFORMATION

**Title:** Timetable for Local Plan Inquiry

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### Purpose

1. The purpose of the paper is to update the Planning Committee on the proposed timetable for the Local Plan Inquiry. In view of the need to get information about timetable for the Inquiry into the public domain as soon as possible, this paper has been tabled as late item.

### Background

2. CNPA Staff met with the Reporters Unit in mid-October and subsequently wrote requesting information on the availability of Reporters for the Local Plan Inquiry (LPI). The Reporters Unit recommended that it now best practice to have two Reporters, working in parallel. In discussion we identified several advantages of this approach:
  - a) This is the first ever LPI into a Local Plan for a Scottish National Park. With two Reporters working as a team they will have greater opportunities for reflection and discussion.
  - b) There would be a shorter Inquiry if Reporters could, at times, sit in parallel sessions in different parts of the Park.
  - c) Parallel sessions would result in hearings being held closer to where people live, hopefully giving a stronger sense of ownership and transparency of the process.
  - d) The writing of the official Report should be speedier.
  - e) There would be less risk in terms of ill health of Reporters, etc.
3. At that stage we anticipated an Inquiry taking place in April 2009. However, following considerable correspondence with the Reporters Unit it emerged that it was difficult for them to find Reporters who were available within that time-slot and, for a while, it seemed that the Inquiry may have to be postponed until at least August 2009.

## Recent progress

4. Within the last few days the Reporters Unit has found two Reporters who are available from May 2009. Both individuals are highly experienced planners and have worked with the Reporters Unit on a number of Inquiries for some time.
5. Following discussion about the implications for the Project Plan the Project Board has agreed that we should opt for an Inquiry in May with the two available Reporters. Staff are confident that we can be ready for the Inquiry at that time and that interested parties would prefer an Inquiry earlier rather than later.

## Next steps

6. The most important next steps will be to:
  - a) Communicate of the proposed timetable to relevant interested parties with specific details of dates and locations to follow as they become available;
  - b) Hold a Business Meeting with the two Reporters and staff from the Reporters Unit to discuss practical arrangements for the Inquiry and agree a date for the formal Pre-Inquiry Meeting;
  - c) Advertise our Intention to hold the LPI before 28 February to comply with recently approved Regulations about changes to the planning system.
7. Staff will, of course, keep the Committee fully informed as we approach the Inquiry. Consideration of modifications to the Plan following the recent consultation exercise is programmed for the Planning Committee meeting on 6 February.

**Murray Ferguson**  
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