

# **AGENDA ITEM 5**

## **APPENDIX 5a**

**2018/0112/DET**

**REPRESENTATIONS  
OBJECTIONS**

# Comments for Planning Application 2018/0112/DET

## Application Summary

Application Number: 2018/0112/DET

Address: Cairngorm Mountain Glenmore Aviemore PH22 1RB

Proposal: Installation of beginner and intermediate artificial ski slopes with associated services

Case Officer: Katherine Donnachie

## Customer Details

Name: Mr Stuart Alexander

Address: 92A High Street Stonehaven

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: This will be a waste of public money - a facility located in the wrong place and without a clearly identified need. As well as an improved snow skiing experience, the way to guarantee viability of the Scottish resorts is mountain biking facilities as most of them have understood. Who exactly is going to use a smallish dry slope 2000ft up a mountain? There are surely plenty of more accessible slopes down the valley that will be less exposed to the elements. The coach parties and sightseers won't want a ski lesson before or after going up the funicular. The locals learn on snow and then put their skis away. People in the central belt go to Hillend or the snowdome. Please someone at HIE get a grip of Cairngorm.

# Comments for Planning Application 2018/0112/DET

## Application Summary

Application Number: 2018/0112/DET

Address: Cairngorm Mountain Glenmore Aviemore PH22 1RB

Proposal: Installation of beginner and intermediate artificial ski slopes with associated services

Case Officer: Katherine Donnachie

## Customer Details

Name: Miss Susan Brown

Address: The Coach House Clunie Bridge Road Pitlochry

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: I object to the development of a dry ski slope as it will affect the delicate nature of the ecosystem in This part of Cairngorms National Park as well as adding a visual blot on the landscape. The joy of Cairngorm Mountain range is seeing the landscape changes through the seasons and this gives it a scenic beauty that is rightly recognised in official designation.



## **Campaigning for the Conservation of Wild Land in Scotland**

*Publisher of Scottish Wild Land News*

Beryl Leatherland  
Convenor  
57 Charles Way  
Limekilns  
Fife  
KY11 3LH

The Cairngorm National Park Authority  
Planning Support Team  
14 The Square  
Grantown- on Spey  
PH 26 3HG

29<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Dear Sir

### **Planning Application 2018/0112/DET: Installation of beginner and intermediate artificial ski slopes with associated services.**

On behalf of our members, I am writing to OBJECT to the above development proposal. Our grounds for objection are concern over landscape impacts, the potential for damage to natural features, the lack of confidence that a quality development will result and concern over the appropriateness of the proposal and its justification in this location. In addition there has been inadequate consultation.

I note that the application has been called in by the Cairngorm National Park Authority, and that it was originally an application made to The Highland Council with planning reference 18/01180/FUL. The reasons for the call in procedure are given as “the proposal will make a significant addition to an important visitor attraction in a sensitive location and is considered to raise issues of significance to the collective aims of the National Park”.

In considering the proposal I have reflected on the recent history of the activities of the Applicant in the ski area. It has to be said that these do not inspire confidence or trust in the company and its contractors to deliver a project or significant change to the necessary high standard required or to do that appropriately.

#### **Visual Impact**

The proposal will have a significant adverse impact on the landscape of the corrie and be visible for some distance away. The ski facility at Hillend in Edinburgh can be seen from 25 kilometres away to the north over a wide arc of populated areas, especially when illuminated, and this one would be expected to be similarly dominant in the landscape of the area. This would be inappropriate in a National Park. The visualisations in the application documents show a very unsightly facility and the dark green blocks of matting will look very unnatural on the typical Cairngorm terrain.



### **Inappropriateness of the proposal**

The specified location is most unsuitable for a beginner or intermediate facility of this nature. The site is exposed, particularly to westerlies and adverse weather, this will be a deterrent for beginners and children in particular. The facility would best be located down at Glenmore or in Aviemore itself, where more infrastructure is to hand and the location would be more convenient for lessons. It is unrealistic to expect people to travel up the hill for a lesson of a couple of hours or less, especially if the weather is poor. There are ski slope facilities in many urban and more central parts of Scotland and it would not be practical for visitors to travel to Cairngorm for lessons when they could achieve the same outcomes nearer home with the associated time and travel cost savings. This proposal is not large enough or sufficiently varied in its features to offer a facility with much scope for skill development, particularly for boarders, so these two points will also limit its usefulness.

### **Justification**

Such a facility however, with its associated uplift infrastructure could be expected to feed into the lift facilities on the hillside above it and thus be available for skiers when the funicular tunnel is blocked as it so often is during the winter. Is this proposal thus a means to an end, with the eventual aim of using it to get customers up the hill and thereby compensating for the frequent unavailability of the funicular?

### **Relevant Policies and Legislation**

I have re-read the Cairngorm National Park Partnership Plan 2017-2022. This provides the strategic context for managing the park as a sustainable tourist destination, coupled with obligations and ambitions relating to conserving and enhancing natural features. The relevant Priorities in this context are Priority 4 Visitor infrastructure and information, Priority 5 Active Cairngorms and Priority 6 Learning and Inclusion. The application documents do not reflect the aims of the Partnership Plan and its priorities, and there is no evidence that they have been taken into account at all.

The National Parks [Scotland] Act 2000 has 4 aims and in fact the proposal could be considered to undermine the first of these which is “to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area”. In Section 9.6 of the Act it is stated that the greatest weight in decision making must be given to this first aim, which this proposal doesn’t address at all.

### **Planning process**

The application documents are inadequate and there is no EIA. The latter is required for proposals in locations where there are designated sites that come under the European Birds and Habitats Directives. Also it seems that there has been no pre-application consultation carried out which would be thought to be essential. The environmental documents on species etc are very meagre, with no supporting data or evidence. There will undoubtedly be adverse landscape impacts and yet no mitigation strategies are proposed [the green matting would not achieve any mitigation].

### **Comment on the Full Supporting Statement**

Presumably Cairngorm Mountain Ltd had assessed the viability of the business before they took it on, and should therefore have been expected to be aware of the seasonality of snow cover and the challenges posed by poor snow records, declining length of the season, the likelihood that these trends would continue and the often difficult weather conditions in this location. This document however seems to suggest that they only realised these factors once they were in operation.

### **Business Impact/Model**

Similarly, the visitor numbers and the range of activities at the site were known when the company took the business on. Since then, rather than investment and improvement, the facilities and management have not improved, in fact the buildings at the centre have been allowed to

deteriorate and indeed management standards have seemed to decline to such an extent that those like me who have visited the area for decades all year round are disappointed to see its decline under the present management. The existing retail and food and beverage facilities are of poor quality, particularly the restaurants which are very unappealing.

Why should the real risk be taken that Cairngorm could be further degraded by a company that has in effect, made a poor business decision? This proposal is obviously unlikely to turn fortunes around. There have been problems with previous applications for work on the site, which apparently entailed unagreed works being undertaken by this company's contractors. Hence there is little confidence that a quality tourist and visitor facility will be delivered to an agreed specification and with compliance with any conditions set.

What is required is an overall plan for recreation and visitor experience, on a year round basis, to be devised and properly consulted upon with all stakeholders. Various options have been considered such as mountain biking trails, and a zip wire course but decided against. The existing Day Lodge is now inadequate so it would seem to be a false economy to increase activities on site without making a comparable improvement to the indoor offering. I very much agree that the long term certainty of employment and retention of experienced staff is a priority, but there are summer activities that could be developed to enable the season to be extended, using the natural assets of the location. This is the case in Alpine resorts which operate year round very effectively. These could include guided and instructional hillwalking and mountaineering courses, educational offerings on geology, flora and fauna and photography courses to mention just a few possibilities.

To support the ski area, Aviemore needs additional facilities such as a good leisure centre, a swimming pool and a climbing wall, in order to increase indoor and bad weather activity alternatives and attract more visitors and repeat visitors as well as providing good facilities for permanent residents to make it an attractive place to live and work. Many local people would be able to be employed both in the village and on the hill, using enlightened employment strategies.

Should you wish to query any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Beryl Leatherland



# Comments for Planning Application 2018/0112/DET

## Application Summary

Application Number: 2018/0112/DET

Address: Cairngorm Mountain Glenmore Aviemore PH22 1RB

Proposal: Installation of beginner and intermediate artificial ski slopes with associated services

Case Officer: Katherine Donnachie

## Customer Details

Name: Mr Cameron Martindale

Address: 25/7 Scott Street Perth

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: There is definitely demand for a good sized dry ski slope in the area. Without a doubt.

However, it would be a crying shame to place one high on the side of one of the most prominent mountains in the area when there is ample terrain lower down that would be hidden by the natural woodland. By placing a dry ski slope in the location proposed one would create a highly negative visual impact beyond what has already been done with the funicular railway. One should remember that people love Aviemore and the Cairngorms as it offers a connection with nature, a place of peace and quiet and beautiful scenery. It would be a disaster to interfere with this when it is simply not necessary.

To summarise the above. YES to a dry ski slope in the area, but this is NOT the location for one.



# Comments for Planning Application 2018/0112/DET

## Application Summary

Application Number: 2018/0112/DET

Address: Cairngorm Mountain Glenmore Aviemore PH22 1RB

Proposal: Installation of beginner and intermediate artificial ski slopes with associated services

Case Officer: Katherine Donnachie

## Customer Details

Name: Mr George Allan

Address: 7 Bothwell Terrace Pitmedden Ellon

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: I am writing on behalf of the North East Mountain Trust (NEMT)- Scottish Charity SCIO 008783- which represents the interests of hill-goers and those who enjoy visiting wild land. NEMT membership, comprising thirteen hillwalking and climbing clubs along with individual members, totals around 1000 people. NEMT has a particular focus on the greater Grampian area.

NEMT objects to this application.

Over the years, the ski area has been a case study in poor environmental management. NEMT had hoped that this was coming to an end with the removal of some of the redundant infrastructure, proposals for increased pockets of tree cover and what we assume will be included in the 'masterplan' for the area. This application runs completely contrary to these hopes. The proposed development will be highly visibly intrusive over a wide area, including from parts of Wild Land Area 15 to the west. There is no surface colour which will blend sufficiently into the landscape to reduce these detrimental visual effects. Because of this, the proposal cannot be justified and, if consultations with skiers have indicated that artificial ski slopes are required, these should be constructed in areas which do not have the sensitivities of the one proposed. Has a proper analysis of demand been undertaken?

NEMT is very surprised that these proposals have been brought forward at all at this point. NEMT has raised, with both the CNPA and HIE, our concerns that, eighteen months after the publication of the Cairngorm and Glenmore Strategy, no 'masterplan' for the ski area has been produced. No good reason as to why the masterplan has not been produced has been forthcoming. NEMT's view is that no planning applications for significant developments should be submitted until such a masterplan, laying out all future aspirations for the area, is published. We also think that the 'masterplan' should be subject to public consultation, given the historical controversies and sensitivities surrounding the area. Even more surprising is the fact that HIE has commissioned a review of the ski infrastructure which will report later in the year. As the proposed artificial ski slope is clearly material to this, why is this application being made now? This drip-drip approach to

potential future developments is not in the public interest and must stop.

NEMT considers this application is wholly inappropriate for the proposed location; however should the Park approve it, it is strongly recommended that the following conditions are included:

1. Where possible there should be native tree planting round the site to screen it.
2. The applicant should fund compensatory native tree planting elsewhere in the Park to offset the visual detriment.
3. There should be binding conditions on its ultimate removal. This is particularly important as no strong evidence has been presented to suggest that it will be a financial success.

George Allan (Trustee- NEMT)

# Comments for Planning Application 2018/0112/DET

## Application Summary

Application Number: 2018/0112/DET

Address: Cairngorm Mountain Glenmore Aviemore PH22 1RB

Proposal: Installation of beginner and intermediate artificial ski slopes with associated services

Case Officer: Katherine Donnachie

## Customer Details

Name: Mr David Gilchrist

Address: 29 Leslie Road Aberdeen Aberdeen

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: As a regular visitor to the Cairngorm mountain, I believe the proposed location is entirely unsuitable for an artificial ski slope. There are two key reasons:

- 1) The area is very exposed to the prevailing South Westerly wind, which will seriously limit the "usability" of the slope. This weather environment is not suitable to the target audience of beginners.
- 2) The slope aspect is visible from many surrounding areas, and there will be considerable visual impact due to the artificial material.

I support the concept of an artificial slope in the vicinity of Cairngorm. However I do not support this proposed location.

# Comments for Planning Application 2018/0112/DET

## Application Summary

Application Number: 2018/0112/DET

Address: Cairngorm Mountain Glenmore Aviemore PH22 1RB

Proposal: Installation of beginner and intermediate artificial ski slopes with associated services

Case Officer: Katherine Donnachie

## Customer Details

Name: Mr Mark Crichton

Address: 18 Bonaly Terrace Edinburgh

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: I feel very strongly that this would be a great miss use of public money, and adds little to no value to the. Cairngorms national park.

# Comments for Planning Application 2018/0112/DET

## Application Summary

Application Number: 2018/0112/DET

Address: Cairngorm Mountain Glenmore Aviemore PH22 1RB

Proposal: Installation of beginner and intermediate artificial ski slopes with associated services

Case Officer: Katherine Donnachie

## Customer Details

Name: Mrs Helen Rennie

Address: 94 Drumossie Avenue Inverness

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: A dry ski slope at Cairngorm will not attract people to ski in the summer. Witness how empty dry slopes are in summer eg Loch Insh Watersports and Hillend.

People come to Cairngorm to ski on real snow over the winter. Even in the winter people will not come for a dry slope. They just won't come unless there is snow hence the value of snow fencing and snow making. It will be an eyesore on the landscape that will not bring in revenue.

Spending the money on improving the ticket purchase and ski hire systems so they run quickly and efficiently would encourage people to come and come back as the system in place is so slow people leave with a negative impression and do not return.

Something like a zip wire that can be done without instruction and hiring equipment and take up a shorter part of the visitor's day would attract more revenue in the summer.

I strongly object to this planning application as it will be of no benefit to either Cairngorm Mountain or the surrounding area as it will not increase spending and detract from the beauty of the area.

# Comments for Planning Application 2018/0112/DET

## Application Summary

Application Number: 2018/0112/DET

Address: Cairngorm Mountain Glenmore Aviemore PH22 1RB

Proposal: Installation of beginner and intermediate artificial ski slopes with associated services

Case Officer: Katherine Donnachie

## Customer Details

Name: Mr Andrew Smith

Address: 21/6 Perth Street Edinburgh

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: Building a dry ski slope in the middle of an area of natural beauty and destroying a fragile landscape has no value.

The matting used does not specify the colour and the material used. Given how fragile the area is specifying this should be a necessity so the company do not use a lower quality material.

Very few people will use the facility as there are ski slopes in the central belt of Scotland. The only people possible are tourists, who will be low in number. Is this worth it? Unlikely the pay back will ever come financially for both the area or the hill.

# Comments for Planning Application 2018/0112/DET

## Application Summary

Application Number: 2018/0112/DET

Address: Cairngorm Mountain Glenmore Aviemore PH22 1RB

Proposal: Installation of beginner and intermediate artificial ski slopes with associated services

Case Officer: Katherine Donnachie

## Customer Details

Name: Mr Terry Smith

Address: 15a Seabank Road Nairn

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: This proposal should not be allowed.

\*The location is exposed to SW winds.

\* The link road that accesses the resort is closed during bad weather ( Supposedly the dry slope will operate in bad weather when the rest of the hill is shut)

\*The preferred slope material is unsuitable (Snowflex does not like ice, freezing temperatures or snow on it) and vehicles can not drive over it.

\*The slope will have a negative impact on views from many famous view points from a long distance.

\*The business case to support this ignores the fact that other, better dry slopes are available nearer to large population centres.

\*Nearly an acre of land will be stripped of peat. Roughly 3000m<sup>3</sup> would be circa 5000 - 8000 tons of peat depending on conditions. That is a vast industrial removal involving many, many trips up and down the slope with machinery that would have to track on to the surrounding area for access etc. The site would be much larger than suggested but the applicant. Previous projects by the applicant have been undertaken in an unprofessional, poorly planned and cack handed manner resulting in huge damage to the area. Frankly their historic destruction of Cairngorm slopes is a disgrace.

\*Many trees will be lost.

\*Livestock, Deer etc are roaming around the area. Has an assessment on a dry slope been made on the safety of animals being trapped etc?

# Comments for Planning Application 2018/0112/DET

## Application Summary

Application Number: 2018/0112/DET

Address: Cairngorm Mountain Glenmore Aviemore PH22 1RB

Proposal: Installation of beginner and intermediate artificial ski slopes with associated services

Case Officer: Katherine Donnachie

## Customer Details

Name: Dr Charles Cook

Address: Bridgefoot cottage Insch

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: A very silly idea. A dry slope in this delicate mountain environment will have an adverse visual appearance to the mountain and also impact the ecology.

It has also been demonstrated at other Scottish ski resorts that dry slopes are very under utilised on the mountain slopes.

It may be more usefull at lower altitudes e.g. The hayfield in glenmore.

The current operator has proposed other daft plans in recent times, and recently spent a lot of public money on a sheiling rope tow, which has hardly been used, and caused a lot of environmental damage with excessive ground works, for which they had not received planning permission.

The destruction of the ciste chairlifts was also carried out without due care for the environment.

I object to this proposal



# Comments for Planning Application 2018/0112/DET

## Application Summary

Application Number: 2018/0112/DET

Address: Cairngorm Mountain Glenmore Aviemore PH22 1RB

Proposal: Installation of beginner and intermediate artificial ski slopes with associated services

Case Officer: Katherine Donnachie

## Customer Details

Name: Mr Alan Bratney

Address: Avonglen 5 Paterson Road Aviemore

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: This planning application should be rejected for a number of reasons.

1. Considerable ground excavations will be required to accommodate pipework that will be required for a water misting system. This will inevitably lead to the unnecessary destruction of flora this is present on the site.
2. The resultant surface will be extremely visually intrusive from some considerable distance. I understand that the applicant has been previously advised that a White or Green coloured surface would not find favour. The application is for a green coloured surface.
3. The backstop at the base of the slope will have a very unappealing appearance for tourists visiting the Coire Cas carpark which is already sufficiently unwelcoming.
4. Hoofed animals such as Reindeer and Red Deer could be injured if they endeavour to walk across the surface in the dark by getting their hooves stuck in the spaces in the matting.
5. The application is incomplete because it fails to specify the type of material that will be used and this is a key determinant of the amount of ground work and hence habitat destruction that will be required.

The CNPA may also wish to question why the applicant has failed to specify the material that will be used for the slope surface.

On 23 November 2015 the following was published on the Snowflex website in relation to Cairngorm Mountain: "Future development plans include a full Olympic standard Snowflex Facility"

In addition, the planning application makes reference to a misting system in the 'Drainage General Arrangement' appendix and also in the Design Statement.

The applicant refers to: 'a thorough surface appraisal is ongoing' but it is clear from the evidence that the surface will be one which requires a misting system as Snowflex does.

The applicant has previously shown a disregard for the planning process and the CNPA may wish

to consider their trustworthiness in relation to this planning application.



www.cairngormscampaign.org.uk

Email: cairngormscampaign@gmail.com

Cairngorms Campaign

The Firs

Crathie

Ballater

AB35 5TJ

16<sup>th</sup> April 2018

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Reference Planning Application 2018/0112/DET Installation of beginner and intermediate artificial ski slopes Cairngorm

On behalf of its members The Cairngorms Campaign objects to this planning application. Below are some of the reasons for our objection:

1. The year round visual intrusiveness of the installation is unacceptable. This is an area visited and valued for its landscape and planning applications at the ski resort should be enhancing not detracting from the setting. As well as the effect on the mountain landscape viewed and accessed by millions of visitors in the locality, in assessing the application the planning authority should consider the effect on Wild Land Area 15.
2. Part of the applicant's case is to increase and extend the winter tourist season but the visual impact of the proposal in a place where summer visitor numbers are dominant and who visit for the mountain landscape and its nature it is more likely to reduce the attraction of the area for visitors.
3. A dry ski slope for beginners/intermediates should be closer to an urban settlement. The user numbers would be higher, the visual impact less and with a less exposed site less experienced skiers would have more fun. This is particularly relevant as public money is behind the development.
4. The damage to flora on the hillside during construction and the ongoing effects on drainage are unacceptable in a National Park whose No 1 aim is to enhance.
5. What is the effect on fauna of the ski slope surface?
6. The application lacks information on the Environmental Impact of the proposal.
7. The application is inconsistent with the Glenmore and Cairngorm Strategy which the applicant and HIE signed up to. What has happened to the "master plan" for the resort?
8. The applicant has an appalling track record in complying with the planning process and to date has shown no regard for the conditions and method statements it signs up to, to protect the environment. Further they have failed to live up to any of the statements they made for the resort when they took on the operation. The potential for further destruction on the mountain slopes and a failure to provide any economic benefit are unacceptable.
9. The lack of economic viability of the applicant and the amount of public money involved raise so many questions about the Cairngorm Ski resort that the Cairngorms National Park Board need not only a demonstrable change of behaviour but a detailed master plan for the resort, an accompanying fully costed business plan and a public consultation process. Why has this planning application been placed ahead of the review of the ski infrastructure by HIE?
10. There are two valuable sources of information that we ask Board members to utilise in considering this application. One is the Parkswatch website which has several articles on the economics and operational history of the operators at Cairngorm. Secondly, the local group that have been looking at a Community "buy out" have high quality knowledge and expertise.
11. What provision has been made for making good should the business fail or the operator exit?
12. Overall given the questions over any sustainable business without further large injections of public money and an operator who has an appalling track record, the negative impact on the landscape, flora and fauna this application should be refused.

Susan Matthews on behalf of the Directors and members of the Cairngorms Campaign

# Comments for Planning Application 2018/0112/DET

## Application Summary

Application Number: 2018/0112/DET

Address: Cairngorm Mountain Glenmore Aviemore PH22 1RB

Proposal: Installation of beginner and intermediate artificial ski slopes with associated services

Case Officer: Katherine Donnachie

## Customer Details

Name: Mrs Marlyn Bratney

Address: 5 Paterson Road AVIEMORE

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: The Aviemore Business Association [ABA], which represents 77 locally based businesses is keen to see sustainable development on Cairngorm that will bring in additional business and create employment. However, there is no empirical evidence that leads to the conclusion that this development will achieve these aims and ABA objects to this planning application for the following reasons:

The aims of the National Park are not being met. In particular, this development will not, in any way, 'conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area'. In fact it will destroy an area that is presently completely natural.

In addition, there is no empirical evidence that points to this development 'promoting sustainable economic and social development of the areas communities'. In fact, the empirical evidence points to just the opposite with the failure and removal of artificial ski slopes at 2 other Scottish Ski Areas [i.e. Glenshee and Lecht]. In addition, the evidence from Glencoe is that their artificial slope is not used at all for ski lessons outwith the ski season because there is no demand during the summer months.

ABA is also concerned that an artificial slope that requires a water based misting system will not be usable during any time periods when the temperature falls below 0C because the misting system will be inoperable then. In an area that is approximately 2300ft above sea level we would suggest that will be a fairly frequent occurrence during the winter months.

It's quite clear that the evidence does not support this development as being commercially viable

ABA also has concerns about the adverse visual impact that the slope will have both in close proximity and from a considerable distance. A green coloured slope will stand out and look very

unnatural.

ABA requests that a representative be permitted to address the Planning Committee because we would like to provide some additional evidence.

# Comments for Planning Application 2018/0112/DET

## Application Summary

Application Number: 2018/0112/DET

Address: Cairngorm Mountain Glenmore Aviemore PH22 1RB

Proposal: Installation of beginner and intermediate artificial ski slopes with associated services

Case Officer: Katherine Donnachie

## Customer Details

Name: Mr Alan Mackay

Address: 9 Bishops Park Inverness

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: I object to this planning application.

The choice of dry slope surface will affect the optimal gradient, whether the slope requires a misting system and the available colours. These points will have an impact on the scale of groundworks required and the extent of visual impact.

However the application states that a final decision on the dry slope surface has not been taken. Thus this application as it stands should be rejected on the grounds that it is incomplete.

I note from email correspondence from March 2017 released under FOI that Katherine Donnachie (CNPA) wrote:

"The regular shapes and white or green colours are inappropriate in this landscape; both exacerbate the visual and landscape impact."

The proposal at March 2017 was for a Snowflex slope, a material only available in white or green. The current application while stating surface material is not finalised, includes a complex drainage & misting system commensurable with a Snowflex slope.

Approving this application would invite the applicant to circumvent the previously expressed concerns of the CNPA planners.

It would be difficult to propose a more inappropriate location for such a slope, due to both its prominence and exposure of the site which faces directly into the prevailing wind.

While economic viability is not usually on its own a planning matter, serious consideration should be given to potential difficulties that would arise with ground reinstatement and visual impact should removal be required.

The Lecht and Glenshee Ski Centres previously had dry ski slopes and in both these cases the mats have subsequently been removed.

The supporting statements make much of the need to increase the weather resilience of CML. A dryslope situated on the exposed Windy Ridge, which still requires road access to Coire Cas will inflict significant negative impacts, while failing to address this objective.

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 23 Apr 2018 23:55:25 +0100  
**To:** Katherine Donnachie;Planning  
**Subject:** 2018/0112/DET

## Badenoch & Strathspey Conservation Group

Fiodhag, Nethybridge, Inverness-shire PH25 3DJ

[REDACTED]  
Scottish Charity No SC003846

Email [info@bscg.org.uk](mailto:info@bscg.org.uk)

Website [bscg.org.uk](http://bscg.org.uk)

Katherine Donnachie

CNPA

23 April 2018

Dear Ms Donnachie

**2018/0112/DET**

**Installation of beginner and intermediate artificial ski slopes with associated services at Cairngorm Mountain, Glenmore, Aviemore, PH22 1RB**

BSCG wishes to object to the above application and we request the opportunity to address the planning committee when the application is determined.

Absence of Masterplan



In 2016, in relation to the Cairngorm & Glenmore Strategy (with which BSCG engaged) the CNPA Board was informed that Natural Retreats was developing a Masterplan that the CNPA expected to be delivered in the near future. As far as we are aware no Masterplan that conforms to the guidance in PAN 83 'Masterplanning' has been delivered.

We are concerned that an inappropriate and unsatisfactory approach of piecemeal development should not be taken.

### Appropriate Assessment

We consider that SNH's advice that an Appropriate Assessment is not required, is out of line with the EUCJ judgement that states:

“Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora must be interpreted as meaning that, in order to determine whether it is necessary to carry out, subsequently, an appropriate assessment of the implications, for a site concerned, of a plan or project, it is not appropriate, at the screening stage, to take account of the measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the plan or project on that site.”

### Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems

We are concerned that the potential impacts on GWDTEs has not been adequately addressed.

### Ecological Impacts

There is insufficient information provided on the quality of M6 and M15 communities and we are concerned that the NVC survey was undertaken at a sub-optimal time of year and could have missed species as a result.

### Landscape and Visual Impacts

This would be a visually intrusive development in a prominent position. It would have significant visual and landscape impacts. It would be visible from existing promoted paths and from a range of other popular locations.

We consider it important that no part of the snow sports area should be treated as 'sacrificial' and that the existing landscape and visual impacts should not be used as justification for additional impacts.

The impacts on Wild Land Area 15 should be thoroughly considered.

### Inappropriate Location

The location is inappropriate. The site of the artificial slopes is particularly exposed; access up the hill is unreliable, dependent on weather conditions and at times the hill has to be closed part way through the day due to weather conditions deteriorating. These weather-related constraints would all be significantly less problematic at a lower altitude location.

The proposed artificial slopes would be better located at lower altitude and closer to urban settlement, both from the point of view of accessibility for users as well as the potential to significantly reduce environmental impacts.

Yours sincerely

Gus Jones

Convener

**From:** Bill Stephens  
**Sent:** 23 Apr 2018 14:04:32 +0100  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Objection to Artificial Ski Slope Planning Application 2018/0112/DET

The implementation programme of the 2016 Cairngorm and Glenmore Strategy includes a Cairngorm Mountain Masterplan to be prepared by Natural Retreats and Highlands and Islands Enterprise producing a Cairngorm Estate Management Plan with both expected to be completed within 18 months. As far as I'm aware, neither has been published as yet but HIE recently commissioned a 'comprehensive review of ski uplift facilities and infrastructure' with Cairngorm Mountain Limited recognising that this 'will play a vital part in the decision making process for the future direction of Cairngorm Mountain'. It is understood that the results of the review will not be available until early October and the planning application for the artificial ski slope is premature and should not be determined until the review has been completed.

Given its scale and the sensitive location the proposal is clearly EIA development and the 26 March letter from CNPA to Highlands Regional Council calling in the planning application asks if a screening opinion has been issued. No response could be found on the CNPA web site and I'd be interested to learn if an Environmental Statement has been requested from the applicant.

The 9 April consultation response from SNH confirms that under the Casework Agreement they have only advised on the impacts on designated wildlife sites with CNPA responsible for assessing landscape and visual impacts. I couldn't find any assessment on the planning application list of documents and would like to know when this is to be published.

In the meantime, I'd point out that photomontages submitted as part of the application do not accurately portray the significant visual impact that the proposal will have. These only shows the green matting with none of the associated infrastructure and does not include any visualisations of the slope during the winter months when the contrast with the surrounding terrain will be even more apparent when covered with snow. The photomontages also show a standard of earthwork restoration that the operators have so far failed to achieve elsewhere in the ski area.

Depending on the outcome of the landscape assessment and the officer's report on the planning application, I may wish to speak when it is considered at the Planning Committee and please accept this email as a request to do so.

Bill Stephens

# Comments for Planning Application 2018/0112/DET

## Application Summary

Application Number: 2018/0112/DET

Address: Cairngorm Mountain Glenmore Aviemore PH22 1RB

Proposal: Installation of beginner and intermediate artificial ski slopes with associated services

Case Officer: Luke Vogan

## Customer Details

Name: Mr George Paton

Address: 56 Balnafettack Road INVERNESS

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: This plan can only be described as a farce....submitted by an organisation, who regularly make no attempt to consider the advice and opinion of the Local Community !

A Dry Slope is certainly not needed on Cairngorm for so many reasons !

It's siting is also questionable....given the weather patterns and frequency for this area !

Not enough research and working with Slope Manufacturers has been carried out.

A Dryslope here would certainly be of no benefit to the Community, both in Employment creation and increased Visitor numbers !

This Application needs to be confined to the Trash Bin and forgotten about !

# Comments for Planning Application 2018/0112/DET

## Application Summary

Application Number: 2018/0112/DET

Address: Cairngorm Mountain Glenmore Aviemore PH22 1RB

Proposal: Installation of beginner and intermediate artificial ski slopes with associated services

Case Officer: Luke Vogan

## Customer Details

Name: Mr Nick Kempe

Address: 23 Queen Square, Glasgow G41 2BG

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: The application has been made outwith the Cairngorm and Glenmore Strategy agreed by the CNPA Board and to which both Natural Retreats and HIE signed up to. Under that NR was supposed to produce and consult on a spatial masterplan for Cairngorm and HIE an estate management plan. Neither has happened and to make matters worse, as a result of public pressure, HIE has commissioned a review of ski infrastructure at Cairngorm but allowed CML to submit a planning application before that has been decided. There has therefore been no proper public consultation on the proposal and the results of the drop in consultation about a dry ski slope which took place last year have not been reported.

The proposed dry ski slope is in the wrong place. Its exposed to the prevailing SW winds and will significantly impact on the experience of visitors arriving at the Coire Cas Car Park. Any plan for Cairngorm worth its name should be enhancing the natural heritage of the area, not destroying it. It will also have a landscape impact from a distance and the CNPA should be maintaining its policy presumption against new developments in the uplands, and even more so in exposed positions such as this.

The business justification for the development is nonsense - no other ski areas in the world expect to maintain summer business or the number of jobs at the same level as in winter and where ski areas have diversified, its to take make the most of natural assets, not to destroy them. There has been no proper estimate of likely demand for this development - eg visitor surveys - or of what the public would really like to see at Cairngorm.

There are serious issues about how public monies will be used to finance this development, with CML having insufficient assets to secure the proposed HIE loan of £1.5m. CML has failed to specify what type of material will be used, which has landscape and infrastructure (spray systems) implications.

# Comments for Planning Application 2018/0112/DET

## Application Summary

Application Number: 2018/0112/DET

Address: Cairngorm Mountain Glenmore Aviemore PH22 1RB

Proposal: Installation of beginner and intermediate artificial ski slopes with associated services

Case Officer: Luke Vogan

## Customer Details

Name: Mr Douglas Bryce

Address: 18 Frogston Avenue Edinburgh

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: This is the wrong location for a dry slope :-)

The visual impact of the plastic matting will be an eyesore and damage the mountain environment. In addition it won't be able to cater for visitors on winter days when the road is blocked by snow.

If there is a business case for a dry slope then it should be located in Aviemore or perhaps the Hayfield? Both locations would be much more suitable - less visual impact, sheltered and much more suitable for small children learning.

People don't travel to the Cairngorm national park to ski / board on artificial slopes. Much better facilities already exist in the major towns and cities.

# Comments for Planning Application 2018/0112/DET

## Application Summary

Application Number: 2018/0112/DET

Address: Cairngorm Mountain Glenmore Aviemore PH22 1RB

Proposal: Installation of beginner and intermediate artificial ski slopes with associated services

Case Officer: Katherine Donnachie

## Customer Details

Name: Mr James Merry

Address: 40 Oakhill Road Aberdeen

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: Having read the plan for the ski slope in the proposed location, I must object. Whilst the economic forecast for the facility is questionable, claiming it will be a "world-class" facility I believe is simply untrue.

Natural Retreats have not impressed me with their management of the entirety of the Cairngorm mountain operation. In their current financial situation and their decision to dismantle the ciste chairlift, I have a real lack of trust in the company. The £1.5million of public money could be used to better enhance the growing summertime sports.

I am currently living and working in Morzine, France; where there is not a single dry ski slope. The success of this resort in summer is down to their investment in mountain biking and hiking. Using existing lift infrastructure and investing in trail creation and maintenance. The rapid growth of road cycling in the UK following the Tour de Yorkshire and success at olympics has been fantastic. The road cycling around the Aviemore area is really good. Promoting the area and especially the cairngorm, Lecht and Glenshee climbs could increase visitors.

As someone who has skied for their whole life, I personally wouldn't use a dry ski slope in summer. The environmental impact to the coire cas area with a dry ski slope is not worth the financial returns. Natural Retreats, HIE and the National parks authority should in my opinion, focus their efforts and investment to promoting the existing but growing summer sports. Using existing lift infrastructure to lessen any financial or environmental losses.

Thank you for taking the time to read my comment,

James Merry

# Comments for Planning Application 2018/0112/DET

## Application Summary

Application Number: 2018/0112/DET

Address: Cairngorm Mountain Glenmore Aviemore PH22 1RB

Proposal: Installation of beginner and intermediate artificial ski slopes with associated services

Case Officer: Katherine Donnachie

## Customer Details

Name: Mr Kevin Mccubbin

Address: Torgormack Northfield Invergordon

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: I object to this proposal.

It would involve removing a considerable area of natural vegetation, heather and some young trees on a delicate environmental site.

It is also a crazy place to put a dry slope, windy exposed etc, people go up a mountain to ski on real snow not on plastic.

It may well be visually intrusive.

Surely development or otherwise should come out of recommendations being made by the company HIE are using to look at the future of snow sports at Cairngorm, this proposal seems to be very premature.

Thank you