
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: An Camas Mòr Update

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Purpose:

To update Members on progress with An Camas Mòr following the adoption of the Principles in December 2008, the decision to grant planning permission in principle on 11 June 2010 and the adoption of the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan on 29 October 2010.

Recommendation

That Members of the Planning Committee note this report.

Background

1. An Camas Mòr as a concept has been around since the late 1980's. With the designation of the Cairngorms National Park in 2003 consideration had to be given to whether An Camas Mòr was compatible with that status. The Deposit Cairngorms National Park Local Plan 2007 subsequently included An Camas Mòr. In December 2008 the CNPA adopted a set of Principles for An Camas Mòr that are required to be reflected in the formal proposals as they come forward. An Camas Mòr is included in the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan adopted 29 October 2010 and the Principles are included within it.
2. On 11 June 2010 the Planning Committee resolved to grant planning permission in principle for a new community at An Camas Mòr. This will comprise up to 1500 residential units with associated business, community facilities and infrastructure taking place over a period of 20+ years. The terms of that decision and a plan of the application site are attached.
3. The application related to the area of land within the red line and all other documentation, including the Proposed Masterplan Report, was in support of the application and largely indicative on the basis that a Full Masterplan and the detail of the development would follow in subsequent applications.
4. There are two aspects to the decision:
 - A Section 75 Agreement covering range of matters where there is a financial element and/or works to be carried out outside the application site. The decision notice can only be issued upon completion of the Section 75 Agreement.
 - An number of conditions including the preparation and submission of a Landscape & Ecology Masterplan which would provide context for preparation and submission of the Full Masterplan, and a full review of the impact of development after 630 units the results of which would inform progress towards up to 1500 units.
5. The resolution to grant permission in principle for up to 1500 units is significant. The information and assessment available with that application was such that additional work is required by the applicant before the precise upper limit of development can be determined. In taking the decision Members considered that the terms of the conditions, in particular the surveys and assessments and other aspects relating to preparation of the two Masterplans, provided the framework and opportunity for the applicant to demonstrate that this upper limit is achievable without unacceptable levels of impact.

6. The Section 75 Agreement has yet to be completed and consequently the decision notice has not yet been issued, but there has been an ongoing dialogue with the applicant on matters relating to the terms of the decision which is covered in the next section of this report.

Current Situation

7. Since the Planning Committee took its decision, CNPA staff have had several meetings with some of the applicant's representatives to clarify the terms of that decision and explain what is expected in terms of the applicant bringing forward proposals for the Landscape & Ecology and Full Masterplans. CNPA staff have made it quite clear the levels of impact that have to be demonstrated to achieve acceptable outcomes in line with that decision, the Local Plan and the Principles. The nature and timing of assessments and surveys that are required to allow CNPA staff to make recommendations on the two Masterplans have been explained to the applicant as it will have a bearing on the content and timing of submission of these documents as well as the outcome of the applications. This is critical as the Masterplan and subsequent detailed applications have to demonstrate compliance with the fundamental Principles at each stage to ensure continuity.
8. To date discussions have been on general interpretation of the 11 June decision. CNPA staff have been keen for some time to engage with the applicant's design/masterplan team on a more substantial basis to advise them on progressing the two Masterplans and it is understood that the applicant may now be in the course of facilitating this.
9. The next stages of the An Camas Mòr project will involve a considerable amount of work for the applicant and involvement of CNPA staff at various stages to offer pre-application advice and in due course to process the formal planning applications. In order to plan the use of our limited resources we have asked the applicant since August for details of their work programme and timescales in order to ensure availability of CNPA staff at appropriate points in the process and help manage our other workstreams over the next year and beyond. At the time of writing this has yet to be received.
10. The CNPA uses Aberdeenshire Council Planning Gain Service to act on our behalf when negotiating developer contributions and related matters in respect of Section 75 Agreements. They have been in discussion with the applicant on Heads of Terms that cover the range the matters reflected in the first part of the 11 June decision. When there is agreement on Heads of Terms solicitors will then be able to draft the formal Section 75 Agreement upon completion of which the decision notice can be issued. Upon completion of the negotiations Planning Committee will be informed of the substance of the package.
11. An Camas Mòr has been asked to contribute, via the Section 75 Agreement, to the delivery of a foot/cycle link with bridge between the site and Aviemore. This is part of a separate Community Park Project and Aviemore & Vicinity Community Council currently have a feasibility study underway.

12. The terms of the 11 June decision require the Full Masterplan to be accompanied by a Statement of Community Consultation and the nature of that consultation to be agreed by CNPA prior to it being carried out. There has been discussion with the applicant and advice given that efforts should be made to complement and draw on other consultations currently underway in the area, but nothing has yet been agreed. The applicant held a community event in September, but that was to update on progress and provide a refresher rather than as part of a formal programme.
13. Finally, it is intended that regular updates will be provided to the Planning Committee.

Recommendation

That Members of the Planning Committee note this report.

Don McKee

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