

**DRAFT**  
**CAIRNGORMS HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP**

**Minutes of the Cairngorms Housing Development Working Group**  
**Held at Cairngorm National Park Authority offices, Grantown-on-Spey on Wednesday**  
**25th August 2004 at 9 am**

<b>Present:</b>	Andrew Thin	Convenor
	Anne MacLean	Board Member
	Sheena Slimon	Board Member
	Norman Brockie	Planning Officer (Local Plan)
	Andrew Harper	Head of Social & Economic Development
	Fiona Munro	Housing Policy Officer

**Apologies**                      Eleanor McIntosh      Board Member

**1.      Minutes of the last meeting/Apologies**

The minutes of the last meeting were recorded as a correct record of the meeting.

**2.      Board Briefing Paper – Housing in the Park (Andrew Harper)**

Andrew Harper went through the briefing paper which highlighted the varied and complex problems relating to housing within the Cairngorm National Park . These are well articulated in the Cairngorms Housing Strategy which was written in 2002 prior to the final designation of the National Park Area. While much of the information in the Strategy is now out of date, the specific problems that are identified have not changed and are set out in the paper.

The paper also highlights changes in the policy context since the Housing Strategy was written and related actions that are being taken by the Cairngorm National Park Authority and partner organisations.

Andrew Thin asked why crofting tenure had not been mentioned, as it was a land tenure activity. There is major scope for subdivision of croft lands, which in turn will make a larger number of smaller crofts eligible for the Crofter Building Grant and Loan Scheme.

Andrew Harper suggested that Andrew Thin’s comments should be taken on board for the next paper as the briefing paper is a background paper.

Don McKee had commented that in the paragraph on page 4 relating to High House Prices and Low wages that it was not just about social housing it was all housing.

Sheena Slimon also clarified the point made about the changing in discount on Council Tax and the fact the additional funding would be retained by the Local Authority and spent according to their strategy. This had still to be agreed formally by

the Local Authority. Sheena also commented on the size of house quoted and stressed that all house sizes were required.

Andrew agreed that the points raised were valid however the information was taken from the Cairngorms Housing Strategy, which was in the process of being updated. These facts may then change and would be amalgamated into the new Strategy.

Andrew Harper was congratulated on the paper and this should now be circulated to the board.

## **2. Feedback on meeting with Odyssey Community Ltd (Anne MacLean)**

Anne reminded the group about the organisation run by Quentin Richards. Odyssey Community Limited specialises in providing low cost home ownership and non grant aided rental schemes for local village people who cannot afford to buy outright. They are a privately funded initiative using no public money.

The Village Trust's responsibilities include choosing who occupies the houses as well as deciding how the trust income will be spent. 20% of the net rental income is given to the landowner as rent for the land and 5% goes to the community.

The meeting held in June established that Odyssey had not looked into Scottish legislation regarding commercial leasing. They had not thought through the fact that low cost home owners would want to own the land they purchased their house on not lease it. Also it was established that mortgage lenders may not wish to lend on the properties. Fiona Munro had written to them on 28th June to confirm that CNPA would only be interested once Odyssey had demonstrated the effectiveness of its model south of the border, and once they had been able to address the specific issues relating to its transferability into the Scottish context. We also emphasised that CNPA are not at present able to endorse or support implementation of the Odyssey model in the CNP, and asked that Odyssey take care not to give any such impression to landowners or other parties with whom they may be in dialogue about possible developments in the Park.

## **3. Kincaig - Forestry Commission and The Highland Small Communities Housing Trust (Andrew Harper)**

Fiona Munro, Norman Brockie and Andrew Harper accompanied Di Alexander and Issi McGrath of the Highland Small Communities Trust on a visit to the site with David Jardine of the Forestry Commission. There was agreement that the CNPA would fund part of a feasibility study into developing the site at Milehouse which would show how local timber can be used as fully but cost-effectively as possible in the construction of affordable house types and the heating of individual houses. It is hoped once tendered the project should also produce a selection of affordable house type designs which maximise the use of local timber but cost no more than a modest kit house of the same size to purchase, erect and run.

#### **4. Affordable Housing Mechanisms - (Fiona Munro)**

Fiona Munro went through the paper which is to promote understand and stimulate discussion on:

- The meaning of the terms ‘affordable housing’ and affordability;
- The variety of mechanisms that are available to support the provision of affordable housing to own;
- The next steps.

There was discussion around what should be the next steps with the paper. It was agreed that the paper should be appended to the ‘Housing in the Park’ briefing paper as information for the Board. Andrew agreed to do this.

There was also discussion on the types of housing mechanism, which may be relevant to the Park and the problems associated with the constraints on water and sewerage.

Andrew Thin thanked Fiona for all the work done on the paper.

#### **5. Cairngorms Housing Strategy and Action Plan - update (Fiona Munro)**

Fiona Munro informed the group on the updating of the Cairngorms Housing Strategy. This was being done in conjunction with their partners in the Cairngorms Housing Strategy Implementation group. A meeting had been held on 22 July 04 with the 3 Communities Scotland Planning Managers and 4 Local Authority Housing Strategy Officers to discuss updating the Strategy and the Cairngorms Housing Needs Assessment. The Strategy is out of date in terms of the Census and policy context. Janet Collins of Housing Plus has been commissioned to do this work but much of the data rests on the outcome of the Housing Needs Assessment. This means that the Strategy will have to be updated in stages. It is estimated that the Housing Strategy will be updated by April. The action plan will then have to be discussed with our partners and new objectives and actions agreed. It is estimated this will be completed by the end of June 05.

#### **6. Cairngorms Housing Needs Assessment - (Fiona Munro)**

This assessment was also part of the discussion on 22 July 04 with the Local Authorities and Communities Scotland. Fiona Munro had prepared a brief to commission a housing needs assessment to discuss at the meeting. However, following discussion on the Local Authorities’ Local Housing Strategies and their housing needs assessments it was decided that a scoping study using existing data was more appropriate. This data must be able to withstand a local plan inquiry. The scoping study should indicate if this was not possible, make suggestions as to what methodology would achieve this and if a second study is required. The 5 scoping study tenders are due back by noon on Friday 27th August 04.

#### **7. Research by Communities Scotland into the Impact of Second and Holiday Homes. (Fiona Munro)**

Fiona Munro outlined the aims and objectives of the research. The main aim of the research is to outline the changing level and distribution of second and holiday homes across Scotland, and to assess the impact of second and holiday homes on local housing markets, local economies and local communities in rural Scotland.

York University are carrying out the research and the Cairngorm National Park Authority area of Grantown-on-Spey, Nethybridge and Carrbridge is one of the 5 case study areas. The others are Gairloch and Poolewe; Islay North, Jura and Colonsay; Arrocher, Luiss, Arden and Ardenconnel ward plus hinterland; Elie.

The fieldwork has now commenced

## **8. Investing in Water Services 2006-2014 (Quality & Standards III)**

The Scottish Executive has now published the two consultation papers Investing In Water Services 2006-2014 the Quality & Standards III project and Paying for Water Services 2006-2014. The closing date for comments is 12th October 04. Fiona Munro will prepare a response for the CNPA and circulate this firstly to the Heads of Group and then to the Housing Development Working group before presenting it to the Board at the Planning Meeting on the 24th September. This means having a finalised response by 16th September for circulation to the Board. It is Fiona's intention to share the Park's response with its partners once it has been finalised and to ask any partner organisation if they will share their response.

Anne MacLean outlined the discussion at the meeting with the Customer Water panel on 24th August. Jim Cockburn, Deputy Convenor and Johanna Dundas of the North West panel met with Eleanor McIntosh, Anne MacLean, Fiona Munro, Andrew Harper, Sheena Slimon and Don McKee to discuss the lack of water and sewerage in the Park. The main discussion issues were:

- a. The perceived blanket constraints on new developments
- b. Lack of funding for first-time provision of services
- c. Mismatch of investment priorities of Scottish Water and those of development agencies (Local Authorities, Housing Associations)
- d. Perceived short-termism of investment strategy
- e. Lack of transparency of plans
- f. The cost to social housing providers
- g. Water quality

Jim Cockburn also suggested 3 people to contact at a high level to lobby Scottish Water. It was agreed that this had been a very useful meeting with the Water Panel and they had suggested visiting on an annual basis. Fiona had suggested that Local Authorities and Housing Associations attend the next meeting and this was welcomed. Jim Cockburn also suggested lobbying MSPs and the Scottish Executive.

**9. AOCB**

- 1 Andrew Thin asked Andrew or Fiona to contact Danny Alexander to ensure there was some media coverage of all the work being done in housing issues.
- 2 Andrew Thin reminded the group of Jane Hope's paper on the future of working groups. The Housing Implementation Strategy Group would now become an advisory group. It was agreed that the Housing Development Working Group would not meet on a regular basis but if there were items which required discussion the group may convene for example to discuss stock transfer. Email would be used to keep everyone up-to-date with progress on the actions outlined in the 'Housing in the Park' briefing paper.
- 3 Jane Hope, Don McKee, Andrew Harper and Fiona Munro are meeting on 2 September 04 to discuss policy issues such as affordable housing allocations and commutable sums.

**10. Date of Next Meeting**

There was no date agreed for the next meeting for the reasons noted in 9.2. However group members will be contacted should a meeting be required.