
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: An Camas Mòr Update

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Purpose:

To give Members a brief update for information on progress with An Camas Mòr and related activity.

Recommendation

That Members of the Planning Committee note and accept the report for information.

Background

1. The Planning Committee in June 2010 resolved to grant planning permission in principle for a new community of up to 1500 homes along with employment and community facilities.
2. The resolution was subject to a Section 75 Planning Obligation covering arrangements for a range of matters including affordable housing, financial contributions for education/health/community facilities, financial provision for the a new foot/cycle bridge over the River Spey linking the west and east sections of the proposed Aviemore Countryside Park, and arrangements for compensatory habitat provision outwith the application site.
3. The Planning in principle decision notice cannot be issued until the Section 75 Planning Obligation has been completed and signed by all parties.
4. The planning permission in principle will also be subject to a number of conditions, the principal ones being the requirement to submit for approval landscape & ecology and full masterplans to set the parameters and guide future development.
5. An Camas Mòr is allocated in the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan adopted in October 2010. It is one of the allocations subject to the legal challenge that was heard in the Court of Session in January 2012. The date of the decision is not yet known, but based on other cases it could possibly be anytime between April and the summer.

Update on Progress

6. Aberdeenshire Council Planning Gain Service, acting for CNPA, have been leading the negotiation with An Camas Mòr LLP (ACMLLP) on the Section 75 Planning Obligation. Whilst it is not appropriate for the Planning Committee to consider the detail of what is being negotiated, there has been a lot of activity on this front over the last few months, progress has been made and the authority is doing all that can be done on its part to ensure there is a finalised version of an agreement as soon as possible that meets the requirements of the 2010 Planning Committee resolution.
7. In the meantime ACMLLP have entered into an arrangement with Springfield Properties to prepare the masterplans and to design and build a first phase, probably of 200 homes. CNPA staff have been meeting with Springfield Properties and their professional advisers since mid-2011 to discuss and advise on content of the masterplans focusing principally on the landscape context, habitat networks and ecological surveys. There have also been discussions with Highland Council and others on a variety of issues including roads, housing, education etc. ACMLLP/Springfield have yet to have discussions with HIE on the employment aspects of the new community that have to be reflected in the masterplan and it is anticipated that this will take place soon.
8. Springfield Properties held an exhibition in Aviemore in December 2011 to show their work to date. The feedback from this event is being fed into their ongoing work. Overall there has been considerable progress since last year and CNPA staff will continue to work with Springfield Properties with a view to pre-application discussions being completed in time to allow for submission of formal applications for the masterplans and a detailed first phase upon the eventual issue of the planning permission in principle. We will continue to keep Members updated on progress.
9. Finally, there is a parallel strand of work currently led by Aviemore & Vicinity Community Council (AVCC) to create Aviemore Countryside Park on either side of the River Spey linked by a foot/cycle bridge that will also allow for a direct pedestrian and cycle link between Aviemore and An Camas Mòr. This was referred to in the conditions that formed part of the Committee resolution on the planning permission in principle. ACMLLP will be providing funding for the bridge via the Section 75 Planning Obligation and AVCC are seeking to enter into leases with Rothiemurchus and Reidhaven Estates for the necessary land and to secure land for the bridge abutments. It is understood that funding has been secured to allow plans to be worked up for the first phase on the west side of the river in order that a further application for the funding to implement it can be lodged this year and work to then take place in 2013. CNPA staff have reinforced with ACMLLP the importance of progress being made with this issue before the application comes forward for the full masterplan. CNPA staff are working with AVCC and others to help them make this long awaited community project a reality. Its success will be dependent on the commitment and willingness of everyone to do what they can, be it finance, in kind with expert advice, or landowners ensuring the necessary land is made available on terms that allow the project to proceed.

Recommendation

That Members of the Planning Committee note and accept the report for information.

Don McKee

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