



Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting

Held at Cairngorms National Park Authority office, Grantown-on-Spey

In Person

24 April 2026 at 10.00am

Present in person

Russell Jones (Convener)

Geva Blackett

Jackie Brierton

Kenny Deans

Lauren MacCallum

Ian McLaren

Duncan Miller

Derek Ross

Paul Gibb (Deputy Convener)

Sandy Bremner

Dr Peter Cosgrove

Bill Lobban

Eleanor Mackintosh

Dr Fiona McLean

Ann Ross

Apologies

Dr Hannah Grist

Steve Micklewright

John Kirk

Michael Williamson

In Attendance

Gavin Miles, Director of Planning and Place

David Berry, Head of Planning and Chief Planning Officer

Emma Bryce, Planning Manager, Development Management

Katie Crerar, Planning Officer, Development Management

Katherine Donnachie, Planning Officer, Development Management

Scott Shanks, Ecological Advice Officer

Emma Greenlees, Planning Support Officer

Peter Ferguson, Harper MacLeod LLP

Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board



Agenda Item 1

Welcome and apologies

1. Russell Jones, the Planning Committee Convener welcomed all present including members of the public and apologies were noted.

Agenda Items 2 and 3

Approval of minutes of previous meetings and Matters arising

2. The minutes of the previous meeting on 13 March 2026 held at Cairngorms National Park Authority, Grantown-on-Spey, were approved with no amendments.
3. Matters arising:
 - a) **In Hand - At para 14i)** Informal Committee / Board discussion session to be considered on how the Committee / Board could support delivery of more community-led initiatives such as this flood defence bund. Board Business Session on community development taking place later this afternoon.
 - b) **In Hand - At para 19i)** Officers to follow up with the Scottish Government (SG) on potential for review of existing permitted development rights, using the wildlife ponds application as an example. Appropriate opportunities are being taken to raise potential case for review with the Scottish Government.
 - c) **In Hand - At para 19ii)** Officers to consider preparing guidance note on what constitutes permitted development versus what requires full planning permission for ponds. Under consideration - will be taken forward as soon as possible.
 - d) **In Hand - A para 30i)** Officers to have conversation with NatureScot about ensuring they assess SLQ 32 (dark skies) when appraising future windfarm applications in and around National Park. Correspondence was underway.
 - e) **In Hand - A para 38i)** Planning Committee visit to battery storage facility in Boat of Garten to be considered. Was being considered as part of ongoing Board site visit / training programme.

Agenda Item 4

Declarations of interest

4. Dr Peter Cosgrove declared an interest in Item 7, as he and his company (Alba Ecology) have undertaken reptile and bird surveys on the site and so he would leave the meeting for the duration of this item.



5. Russell Jones declared an interest in Item 5, as he works for a company who purchases wood from Pitmain estate and so he would leave the meeting for the duration of this item.
6. The Convener passed the chairing of the meeting to Paul Gibb, Deputy Planning Committee Convener.

Russell Jones left the room at 10.07am

Agenda Item 5

Application for Detailed Planning Permission 2025/0167/DET
Construction of forestry extraction track, track upgrading
At Land 465M NW of Golden Acre, Glen Road, Newtonmore
Recommendation: Approve subject to conditions

7. Katherine Donnachie, Planning Officer (Development Management) presented the paper to the committee.
8. The Committee were invited to ask the Planning Officer for clarity, and the following points were raised:
 - a) A member queried her understanding that there was a move away from a central vegetated strip on a track because it could act as a stepping stone for fire and asked shouldn't policy be reassessed from a fire safety perspective? Planning Officer explained that the track's primary purpose was forestry, not fire management. The applicant had not proposed it as a fire management tool. Member commented that fire risk should be considered in every application, particularly given new tree planting and open moorland creating a fire hazard.
 - b) A member asked if the new bridge would remain after forestry operations were completed and would the site be reinstated? Planning Officer advised that the track and bridge would remain.
 - c) A member asked how close was the proposed track to ancient woodland? Planning Officer advised that the track does not pass through ancient woodland and reassurance was given that there would be no impact on the ancient woodland.
 - d) A member asked if there had been further community council comments beyond those listed in Appendix 3? Planning Officer confirmed that the comments in Appendix 3 were the only response received.



- e) A member asked if the lack of further community council comments could be due to the timing between meetings? Planning Officer confirmed that the community council did not advise that meeting timing was an issue or request more time.
- f) A member agreed with the earlier concern with regard to the vegetation strip and stated it should be better designed to help defend Newtonmore against wildfire. He asked if members disagreed with the central strip requirements could it be removed? Chief Planning Officer and Head of Planning confirmed that condition 6e could be removed if members considered it appropriate.
- g) A member asked if timber lorries would use this track or would the timber be taken out by estate vehicles only? Planning Officer confirmed that timber lorries (HGVs) would use the track. Timber would be brought by forwarders to the western end of the track, where HGVs would load and transport it off-site, accessing the track from the east.

9. The Agent Christopher Farquhar addressed the Committee.

10. The Committee were invited to come back on points raised; the following points were raised:

- a) A member asked if the archaeological survey was a standard requirement or was it something they would be doing voluntarily? Christopher Farquhar confirmed it would be as part of the conditions.
- b) A member questioned the mention of a reservoir and asked if there would be any impact on that? Christopher Farquhar advised that there would not be any impacts on the reservoir.
- c) A member asked what mitigation would be put in place for local residents during the construction phase? Christopher Farquhar advised that the nearest house was 400m away. Member went on to ask if the timber would be extracted on Sundays? Christopher Farquhar advised that the extracting and collecting would take place Monday to Fridays and were happy for it to be conditioned, if necessary.
- d) A member asked for clarification whether the woodland pictured in Appendix 1a would be extracted? Christopher Farquhar confirmed that it would be felled and replanted with native seed.
- e) A member asked what the impact would be on the land management plan if the proposal was not approved. Euan Harris advised that timber could not be extracted without this track.
- f) A member asked why the woodland could not be extracted without the track. Christopher Farquhar advised that it was because of constraints on roads.



- g) A Member asked if timber could be transported elsewhere if estate vehicles used Glen Road? Euan Harris explained that using estate vehicles on Glen Road did not make operational or safety sense, and therefore timber extraction must rely on the forestry track and HGV access as proposed.

11. The Committee were invited to discuss the report. The following points were raised:

- a) A member reiterated concerns regarding wildfire risk and proposed a potential solution whereby the southern section of the track, which provides protection to Newtonmore and was largely visually screened by existing woodland, should operate as a strategic fire break without a central vegetated strip. It was noted that the north–south section of the track was more visually prominent, and that in this section the presence of a central vegetated strip would be more appropriate, particularly as the adjacent watercourse and bridge already provided an effective fire break.
- b) Several Members expressed discomfort with the length of the track relative to the volume of timber to be extracted and the use of large timber lorries but acknowledged that Glen Road presents significant safety and operational constraints, and that no viable alternative extraction route had been identified.
- c) Other members noted that the applicant had undertaken extensive engagement with officers, revised the proposal in response to advice, and that the scheme now represented the best available solution.
- d) A suggestion was made that an additional informative or condition could be added to restrict timber extraction hours in line with construction working hours. Chief Planning Officer and Head of Planning advised that timber felling and extraction activities are best controlled through the separate Scottish Forestry felling licence.
- e) Concerns were raised regarding peat disturbance, including reference to a 30-metre buffer either side of the track. Planning Officer clarified that:
 - i. The 30-metre area represented an assessment and mitigation buffer, not an area of excavation.
 - ii. The applicant would micro-site the track to avoid deep peat where possible and use floating road construction where appropriate.
 - iii. Any peat disturbance must be offset through new peatland restoration.
- f) Clarification was sought regarding the reference to “wider estate purposes”. Planning Officer advised that the track would remain in situ and support ongoing estate management purposes beyond timber extraction.
- g) Several members expressed their support for the application, commending the applicant for the level of work undertaken to reach the current proposal. Support was linked to inclusion of an additional condition relating to differential treatment



of the central vegetated strip. Head of Planning and Chief Planning Officer proposed rather than an additional condition, to amend the recommended condition 6e. This was accepted.

12. The Committee approved the application as per the officer's recommendation with the amended condition.

13. Action Point arising:

- i. None.

Russell Jones returned to the room at 11.05

Paused for a 5min comfort break.

Meeting resumed at 11.13

14. The Convener thanked Deputy Convener for having chaired the meeting in his absence.

Agenda Item 6

Application for Detailed Planning Permission 2025/0300/DET

Installation of hydro-electric scheme and associated works

At Land 650 Metres Southwest of Dalmunzie Castle Hotel, Spittal of Glenshee, Blairgowrie, PH10 7QG

Recommendation: Approve subject to conditions

15. Katherine Donnachie, Planning Officer (Development Management) presented the paper to the committee.

16. The Committee were invited to ask the Planning Officer for clarity, and the following points were raised:

- a) A member queried when would the work be taking place and would they be mindful of not disturbing deer in the area and on neighbouring estates? Planning Officer advised that proposed work would take place at the end of the summer and as deer management was not something that would usually be considered this part of the question was deferred to the applicant.
- b) A member raised a question regarding freshwater pearl mussel, noting that while the watercourse itself does not contain the species, the lower catchment does, and that the watercourse is accessible to migratory salmon, which may act as a vector. It was suggested that reference to freshwater pearl mussel be added to



the condition relating to protected species surveys. It was emphasised that this would be a precautionary addition to avoid any potential oversight. Planning Officer advised freshwater pearl mussel was not a qualifying interest of the relevant Special Area of Conservation, and therefore no survey had been requested by officers or NatureScot.

- c) Scott Shanks, Ecological Advice Officer advised that while the presence of freshwater pearl mussel downstream could not be entirely ruled out, the existing mitigation measures for salmon and freshwater ecology would be sufficient to avoid adverse impacts if freshwater pearl mussel were present downstream.
- d) Head of Planning and Chief Planning Officer confirmed that there would be no objection to amending the wording of the condition to include freshwater pearl mussel, should members wish this to be added for completeness and reassurance. The member confirmed satisfaction with this approach.
- e) A member sought clarification on the wording of one of the recommended conditions regarding work during the bird breeding season. Planning Officer explained that the intention of the condition was to operate as an either/or requirement: works outside the bird breeding season would not require further action; whereas if works could not reasonably be undertaken outside the bird breeding season a pre-construction bird survey would be required, and appropriate mitigation implemented if necessary.
- f) The member reiterated concern that the wording could be read as a prohibition on works during the bird breeding season and suggested that clarity could be improved by re-wording the condition. Planning Officer accepted that the wording could be clarified and confirmed that the condition would be re-worded to remove ambiguity and ensure it clearly reflected the intended either/or approach.

17. The applicant, Dan Newcombe was available to answer questions:

- a) A member asked if neighbouring estates would be consulted ahead of planned works? Dan Newcombe provided reassurance that if the work was going to impact on deer they would not do it, as they stalk themselves.

18. The Committee were invited to discuss the report. The following points were raised:

- a) Support was expressed for the inclusion of renewable energy provision for the hotel, with Members commenting that the continued operation of the hotel was important for the local area and that the proposal would provide wider benefits to Glenshee.
- b) Preference was expressed for this form of development over more visually intrusive alternatives, such as a large wind turbine.



19. The Committee approved the application as per the officer's recommendation subjected to the conditions as amended and agreed.

20. Action Points arising:

- i. None.

Dr Peter Cosgrove left the room at 11.41am

Agenda Item 7

Application for Detailed Planning Permission 2026/0095/DET

Change of house type (Plot 17)

At Nethybridge Station Yard, Station Road, Nethy Bridge

Recommendation: Approve subject to conditions

21. Emma Bryce, Planning Manager (Development Management) presented the paper to the committee.

22. The applicant, Ron Laing addressed the Committee.

23. The Committee were invited to discuss the report. The following points were raised:

- a) A member commented that this was a sensible proposal and that it was routine for building companies to change their makeup of a development.
- b) A member commended the excellent initial application.

24. The Committee approved the application as per the officer's recommendation.

25. Action Points arising:

- i. None.

Dr Peter Cosgrove returned to the room at 11.51am

Agenda Item 8

Application for Detailed Planning Permission 2025/0238/DET

Demolish estate larder and erect a single storey steel portal framed replacement larder with general purpose area

At Kynadrochit Lodge, Tomintoul, Ballindalloch, Moray, AB37 9HJ

Recommendation: Approve subject to conditions



26. Katie Crerar, Planning Officer (Development Management) presented the paper to the committee.
27. The Committee were invited to ask the Planning Officer for clarity, and the following points were raised:
- a) A member asked for clarity around the location of the proposed compensatory planting to SE of Tomintoul? Planning Officer confirmed it would be on the edge, where the pods are. The member raised concern as there had been issues previously in that location with compensatory planting and wondered if the same issue would arise? Director of Planning and Place provided reassurance that it was a different area of ground to be planted.
 - b) Member queried condition 4 (covering work during the bird breeding season) to ensure the wording was enforceable and clear to the applicant. Planning Officer noted this and provided reassurance that this would be taken forward.
 - c) Head of Planning and Chief Planning Officer added that he would ensure that an additional condition around compensatory planting is added.
28. The Committee were invited to discuss the report. The following point was raised:
- a) A member praised the application; the development would be contained within its own site and not visible to the public.
29. The Committee approved the application as per the officer's recommendation with additional condition around compensatory planting and amendment of wording in condition 4.
30. Action Points arising:
- i. None.

Agenda Item 9

AOCB

31. David Berry, Head of Planning and Chief Planning Officer gave the following update:
- a) Update on next Local Development Plan
 - i. LDP Evidence Report has now been submitted to the DPEA and a Reporter has been assigned to undertake its 'gatecheck'. Will provide further progress update at next committee.
43. The Committee Convener raised a motion to move to a confidential session.



Date of next meeting

44. The public business of the meeting concluded at 12.09

Date of next meeting 12 June 2026