

Planning Service Charter

The service standards our customers can expect

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I. OUR COMMITMENT

Overall purpose: Our Planning Service is a key part of the Cairngorms National Park Authority and is committed to the Vision¹, Mission and Values as set out in the Corporate Plan 2015 to 2018. The Planning Service plays a key part in creating the Park we all want by getting the right development in the right place, by promoting investment, by protecting and enhancing the natural/cultural environment and by creating places that we will value and enjoy. In order to do this the five key themes behind our approach are:

- **Open for Business:** The Planning Service is delivery-focussed and open to new ideas, promoting and encouraging investment in the Park to meet the needs of local communities, businesses and visitors and to enhance the Park's natural capital.
- **High-quality development on the ground:** The Park is an area to encourage the highest quality in terms of design so that we create great places to live, work and visit. CNPA, through preparation of the Local Development Plan and its planning decisions, gives leadership and direction to make this happen.
- **Focussed on customers and continuously improving:** The Planning Service takes a broad view of the customer, looking beyond applicants for planning permission and objectors, achieving positive outcomes for the Park in the long term. We are constantly listening to feedback and take a proactive approach to service improvement. Our staff are highly professional, efficient and effective.
- **It's a Partnership:** Good outcomes from the Planning Service in the Park result from a partnership between CNPA, other parts of public service and the private and voluntary/charitable sectors. We promote gatherings of people to facilitate positive involvement from developers, community councils and associations and all other interested parties.
- **Open and Engaging:** We get the best out of the Planning Service if people get involved in the process early, ideally at the stage when the Local Development Plans are being drawn up and when development proposals are at a very early stage. CNPA consults widely and works closely with local authorities, other public bodies and Community Councils and Associations. We strongly encourage pre-application discussion with local authorities about any development proposal to get the best outcome for customers and for the Park.

¹ The Vision: "An outstanding National Park, enjoyed and valued by everyone, where nature and people thrive together"

2. THE PLANNING SERVICE

The Service is part of a larger Planning and Rural Development Group and is made up of staff in two teams, led by the Head of Planning:

- Development Planning – working to prepare and monitor a Local Development Plan (LDP) for the National Park, which sets the policies to encourage appropriate development; and
- Development Management – assessing the most significant planning applications in the Park against the LDP, providing advice to the Planning Committee, monitoring and enforcement.

The Planning Service works in close partnership with each of the five local authorities to deliver the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan which provides a common set of policies for the whole National Park. The Service draws on a wide range of specialists who provide advice on policy formulation and on planning applications – for example, on ecology and landscape issues (from within CNPA) and on roads or flooding impacts (from local authorities and other public sector partners).

This Charter sets out the standards that our customers can expect from the Service. Our aim is to always meet the timescales set out in these standards but there will be times when this will not be possible. You can find more detail of who does what at the [contacts](#) section of our website.

We publish a series of [Cairngorms Planning Advice Notes](#) on our website to provide helpful advice on planning issues.

3. DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Our Development Planning team is responsible for preparing planning policy and guidance. They prepare the [Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan](#) (LDP) and associated Supplementary Guidance. They also continually monitor the adopted LDP to review its effectiveness. The [Development Plan Scheme](#) provides the timetable for our LDP preparation and how you can get involved.

Our Service Standards

1. We will write all policy, guidance and other correspondence in plain English.
2. We are committed to the National Standards for Community Engagement will always consult the public, Community Councils and Associations and other stakeholders for a minimum of 6 weeks.
3. We will acknowledge receipt of written consultation responses and update responders at key stages of the process.
4. We will monitor the Local Development Plan to review its effectiveness and publish the results on our website annually.
5. We will publish the Local Development Plan online as part of a wider approach to e-planning.

4. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Development management is a key part of our planning service and covers:

- Assessing planning applications against the policies in the LDP
- Providing recommendations to the CNPA Planning Committee
- Monitoring and enforcement functions.

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

14 The Square, Grantown on Spey, PH26 3HG.

t: 01479873535 f: 01479873527 e: enquiries@cairngorms.co.uk w: cairngorms.co.uk

Our Service Standards

1. We will, within 21 days of receipt by CNPA, call-in planning applications for determination by the CNPA where, in the opinion of the Head of Planning, these applications raise issues of potential significance to the four aims of the National Park.
2. We will check all applications for sufficient information within 5 working days of our receipt and request further information if required to enable our assessment of the application.
3. We will ask all applicants to enter into a Processing Agreement, setting out a plan and timescale for determination.
4. We will aim to determine all called-in planning applications meeting our supporting information requirements either within statutory timescales or within the prescribed determination timescale agreed set-out in the relevant Processing Agreement.
5. We will issue all Decision Notices within 10 working days of the relevant Planning Committee meeting (unless a legal agreement is still to be signed).
6. We will provide an [e-planning service](#) to make it easy for anyone interested to see all the relevant documents online.

MONITORING

Our Monitoring and Enforcement Officer ensures that planning permissions and their conditions are being complied with. Applicants are now required to notify us when they intend to start building and when works are complete.

Our Service Standards

1. We will acknowledge Notices of Initiation of Development within 3 working days of receipt.
2. We will respond to information submitted to meet conditions on a planning permission within 20 working days.
3. We will respond to a written request for a Non-Material Variation to a planning permission within 20 working days.

ENFORCEMENT

Our Monitoring and Enforcement Officer investigates possible breaches of planning control and seeks remedial action where necessary. For further details, please see our [Enforcement Charter](#).

Our Service Standards

1. We will acknowledge receipt of written enquiries or concerns about development within 5 working days.
2. We will respect the confidentiality of anyone raising a concern about a possible breach of planning control as far as is reasonably and legally possible. However, a request for confidentiality may also restrict our capacity to fully investigate the relevant matters.
3. We will write to complainants within 20 working days of receipt of a written enquiry, to advise whether further action will be taken and we will keep all parties informed.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Our Planning Committee meets once a month in public to consider planning applications, enforcement actions, and policy papers. All our Board members sit on the Planning Committee.

Our Service Standards

1. The Planning Committee operates under the terms of its [Standing Orders](#) and members observe the [Code of Conduct for Members](#).
2. We will publish an annual diary of Committee meeting dates on our website.
3. We will write to anyone who has made a written representation about an application 7 working days before the meeting, to let them know when and where the meeting will take place.

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4. We will make [Committee papers](#) available on our website and at our Grantown on Spey office 7 days before the date of each meeting.
5. We will publish draft minutes on our website within 20 working days of each meeting.

5. MONITORING OUR PERFORMANCE

We will carry out regular monitoring to check that we are achieving our service standards.

We will benchmark our performance against equivalent rural planning authorities, publish quarterly performance information and report on our performance and progress in meeting these standards on an annual basis. We will review these service standards annually and update this Charter to ensure they are still relevant.

6. WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Contact us: You can contact us in the following ways:

Email: planning@cairngorms.co.uk

Phone: 01479 873535

Address: Cairngorms National Park Authority, 14 The Square, Grantown-on-Spey, PH26 3HG.

Our office is open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Information on planning applications can be viewed online at our [ePlanning pages](#), at our Grantown on Spey office, and information can also be made available at our Ballater office on request (Albert Memorial Hall, Station Square, AB35 5QB).

How to give feedback

We welcome feedback to help us improve our service. You can email us direct or complete our online [planning satisfaction survey](#).

Complaints

We aim to provide a high standard of service at all times. However, sometimes problems do arise. Please direct any complaint to the person you first speak to or communicate with at CNPA, and if unresolved to the Head of Planning at CNPA. If the matter remains unresolved, please refer to our formal [Complaints Procedure](#).