



Draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting

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

28 August 2026 at 11.00am

Present in person

Russell Jones (Convener)
Sandy Bremner
John Kirk
Eleanor Mackintosh
Derek Ross

Paul Gibb (Deputy Convener)
Jackie Brierton
Bill Lobban
Duncan Miller
Michael Williamson

Virtual

Geva Blackett
Lauren MacCallum
Steve Micklewright
Scott Shanks, Ecological Advice Officer (Planning)
Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board

Dr Hannah Grist
Dr Fiona McLean
Ann Ross

Apologies

Dr Pete Cosgrove
Kenny Deans
Ian McLaren

In Attendance

Gavin Miles, Director of Planning and Place
David Berry, Head of Planning and Chief Planning Officer
Emma Bryce, Planning Manager (Development Manager)
Heather Boswell, Senior Planning Officer



Katie Crerar, Planning Officer, Development Management
Katherine Donnachie, Planning Officer, Development Management
Emma Greenlees, Planning Administrator
Edward Swales, Monitoring and Enforcement Officer
Peter Ferguson, Harper MacLeod LLP
Adam Streeter-Smith, Access Infrastructure Manager

Agenda Item 1

Welcome and apologies

1. Russell Jones, 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 12 June 2026 held at Cairngorms National Park Authority, Grantown-on-Spey, were approved with no amendments.
3. There was one action point arising - the reference to the Ladder Hills Special Area of Conservation (SAC) was corrected in the Officer's report for planning application 2026/0060/DET (new MTB track at the Lecht Ski Centre).

Agenda Item 4

Declarations of interest

4. Lauren MacCallum declared a direct interest in Item 6 as she is close friends with the applicant (owner) and would therefore leave the room for this item.
5. Geva Blackett advised that as she was unable to attend the site visit for Item 6, as per standing orders, she should not take part in the determination so would leave the room for this item.
6. Russell Jones, Duncan Miller and Ann Ross also did not attend the site visit for Item 6 and as per Standing orders, would not take part in the determination of this item and would therefore leave the room.
7. There were no further declarations of interest.



Agenda Item 5

Application for Detailed Planning Permission 2025/0109/DET

Formation of 3m wide 9km long segregated non-motorised user route/path

At Land Between Aviemore and Carrbridge, PH22 and PH23

Recommendation: Approve subject to conditions

8. Heather Boswell, Senior Planning Officer presented the paper to the committee.
9. The Committee were invited to ask the Planning Officer for clarity, and the following points were raised:
 - a) A member asked why Emma Roddick MSP had been listed as a consultee on page 15 of the report, noting that MSPs are not routinely consulted on planning applications. The Head of Planning and Chief Planning Officer confirmed that Emma Roddick MSP had responded to a notification of the planning application but had not been a specific consultee. The report would be corrected accordingly.
 - b) A question was raised about whether the path would pass through agricultural land and, if so, whether it would be fenced off. Head of Planning and Chief Planning Officer advised that a number of matters were covered by planning conditions, and that Condition 11 requires agreement with the Park Authority on a range of detailed elements prior to development commencing, including arrangements for fencing.
 - c) Concern was raised regarding the loss of ancient woodland and veteran trees. A question was asked as to whether the Highland Council Forestry Officer had provided any further response following the submission of additional information, specifically regarding mitigation measures and compensatory planting proposals. Senior Planning Officer advised that they had re-engaged with the Forestry Officer; however, no updated response had been received. Nevertheless, Officers were satisfied with the proposed compensatory planting and the compensatory planting ratios proposed were considered acceptable.
 - d) Member raised a question regarding the Habitat Regulations Appraisal (HRA) and the number of species potentially affected by the development. Clarification was sought on whether officers were satisfied that adequate measures were in place to prevent significant adverse effects. Senior Planning Officer confirmed that the Park Authority's Ecological Advice Officer had reviewed the supporting information and was content with both the



mitigation schedule and the measures proposed. It was also noted that a range of conditions, including habitat management plans and other environmental and ecological requirements, would be attached to any consent granted. Head of Planning and Chief Planning Officer added that NatureScot had been consulted on the HRA and had confirmed agreement with the conclusions reached.

- a) A member commented that there often appears to be a presumption in favour of felling trees that are in the way of developments and questioned whether consideration had been given to relocating the route. Senior Planning Officer advised that the applicant had assessed all route options and concluded that the proposed alignment represented the most suitable. Where trees are affected, the applicant has proposed protection measures aimed at retaining and safeguarding as many veteran and other important trees as possible. Detailed tree protection measures would be secured through planning conditions and developed further during the final design stage.
- b) A member requested clarification about the proposed Granish Junction arrangements and how non-motorised users would interact with the junction layout. Senior Planning Officer explained that users of the Non-Motorised User (NMU) route would travel along the eastern side of the A95, adjacent to the proposed roundabout associated with the A9 dualling works. Users would be physically separated from vehicular traffic within the route corridor. To the north of the roundabout, a signalised crossing is proposed which would enable users to cross safely from the eastern side to the western side of the A95.

10. Steven Herriot (Applicant), Gary Kinniburgh (Agent) and Jenny Roberts (Agent) addressed the Committee.

11. The Committee asked the following points of clarity of the speakers:

- a) A member sought clarification on the anticipated timescale for delivery. Mr Herriot advised that Transport Scotland intends to deliver the NMU route alongside the Dalraddy to Slochd dualling project through a single construction contract. Subject to approvals and land acquisition being secured, a contract award is anticipated in 2027, with the wider project programmed to run until 2032. It was noted that there may be opportunities to phase the NMU works, allowing some sections of the route to be delivered earlier within the overall construction programme.



- b) A member sought clarification on compensatory planting, noting that woodland planting associated with the A9 Dalraddy to Slochd scheme was already planned. They questioned whether the removal of ancient woodland for the NMU route would result in additional compensatory planting beyond that already committed for the A9 project. Mr Herriot advised that approximately 40 hectares of off-site compensatory planting had already been secured as part of the A9 Dalraddy to Slochd scheme. In addition, a further 10 hectares of off-site compensatory woodland planting would be provided specifically to mitigate woodland loss associated with the NMU route. While this planting would be located within the same general area, it would be additional to the compensatory planting already agreed for the A9 project.
- c) A member noted that ancient woodland is an irreplaceable habitat and asked whether enough had been done to avoid its loss. They also sought reassurance that the scheme would deliver biodiversity and nature benefits beyond compensatory planting. Ms Roberts explained that the compensatory planting for the loss of ancient woodland was intended to offset woodland removal and should not be treated as a biodiversity enhancement. She said the scheme also includes measures to meet the requirements of NPF4 in terms of biodiversity enhancement, including a pollinator corridor along the route to benefit invertebrates and priority species identified by the Park Authority. Additional woodland management measures are proposed in the northern section near Carrbridge, with habitat improvements targeted at priority species.
- d) A member asked whether compensatory planting would be located near existing ancient woodland to maximise ecological benefit and requested further information on how soil translocation would help retain or restore ecological value. Ms Roberts explained that, where possible, soils from areas of ancient woodland would be retained and reused within the scheme to preserve seed stock and soil microbial communities. Mr Kinniburgh added that the compensatory woodland planting would not be adjacent to ancient woodland but would be located adjacent to existing woodland near Kinchardy, north of Spey Golf Course.
- e) A member asked about the proposed phasing of the scheme, given the strong community support for early delivery of certain sections. Mr Kinniburgh advised that, subject to project approvals and a contract award by the end of



2027, Transport Scotland would seek to deliver the NMU route early within the wider construction contract. Construction of the route was anticipated to take approximately 12 to 18 months, following an initial mobilisation period for the contractor. It was also noted that early completion of the Carrbridge to Kinveachy section could be considered, reflecting feedback received during public consultation.

- f) A member asked whether the proposed path needed to be 3 metres wide. Mr Kinniburgh advised that the standard design width for a paved active travel route is 4 metres. However, the proposed route had been reduced to 3 metres to minimise impacts on woodland, biodiversity and land take. They considered the reduced width to be justified while still providing an appropriate standard for users.

12. The Planning Officer was invited to come back on issues raised during speakers' presentation:

- a) No comments intimated.

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

- a) Members expressed strong support for the proposal, highlighting the long-standing demand for a safe active travel route between Aviemore and Carrbridge.
- b) A member welcomed the application, noting that local communities had sought such a route for many years. He emphasised the significant public safety benefits of providing a dedicated non-motorised route, particularly given the risks associated with the existing NCN7 route on the public road, and stated his full support for the application.
- c) Another member noted that a safe cycle route between Carrbridge and Aviemore had been discussed for many years. While acknowledging that some details, including the Granish crossing arrangements, remained to be finalised, she confirmed her support for the proposal.
- d) A Member recognised the substantial public benefits of the scheme and the opportunities it would provide for active travel through the landscape. While expressing concern about the loss of ancient woodland and noting that this represented a departure from planning policy, he accepted that the wider public benefits justified the proposal. He also welcomed the proposed soil



translocation measures as a means of retaining some of the ecological value of affected woodland areas and confirmed his support for the application.

- e) In summing up, the Convener welcomed the long-awaited project and commended those involved in its development, including the Park Authority and Transport Scotland. He expressed hope that the scheme would be delivered as soon as possible.

14. The Committee **approved** the application subject to the conditions stated in the officer's report.

15. Action Point arising:

- i. **Officer's report to be amended to correctly reference comments from Emma Broderick MSP.**

16. The Planning Committee Convener passed the Chairing of the meeting on to Deputy Convener Paul Gibb for the duration of the next item.

The meeting paused for a comfort break at 11.49am

Russell Jones, Duncan Miller and Gavin Miles left the room at 11.49 am.

The meeting reconvened at 12.00 pm

Adam Streeter-Smith joined the meeting at 12.00pm

Geva Blackett, Lauren MacCallum and Ann Ross left the meeting at 12.01pm

Agenda Item 6

Application for Detailed Planning Permission 2026/0104/DET

Installation of raised decking for outdoor eating/drinking; provision of 10 car parking spaces; and provision of picnic tables

At Old Bridge Inn, 23 Dalfaber Road, Aviemore, PH22 1PU

Recommendation: Approve subject to conditions

17. Katie Crerar, Planning Officer presented the paper to the committee.

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

- a) A member asked whether motorhomes would be permitted to stay overnight in the proposed parking area and, if so, what fire safety measures would be in



place. Planning Officer advised that the application was for a parking area associated with the Old Bridge Inn and did not specifically include provision for motorhome overnight stays. While motorhomes could potentially use the car park occasionally, the management of parking arrangements would be a matter for the operator. If the site were to be used more extensively for motorhome accommodation, or in a manner not covered by the approved use, this would require a separate planning application.

- b) A member sought clarification on the report's conclusion that wider parking concerns were not material to the determination of the application. The Planning Officer explained that the assessment must focus on whether sufficient parking is provided for the proposed development itself. While existing parking issues on Dalfaber Road were acknowledged, they would only be relevant to the determination of this application if the development would worsen them. Highland Council Roads advised that the maximum parking requirement is one space per 10 square metres of additional floor area. Based on the proposed 72 square metre decking extension, approximately eight spaces would be required. As the proposal includes 10 spaces, officers considered the parking provision adequate and compliant with the relevant standards.
- c) A member noted concerns about the proposed removal of a tree containing a large hollow, which could provide important habitat for bats and other wildlife. They asked whether the tree could be pollarded rather than removed entirely, allowing the habitat feature to be retained while addressing safety concerns. Similar concerns were raised regarding a dead birch tree, with a suggestion that part of the standing deadwood could be retained where safe to preserve its ecological value. Planning Officer advised that further arboricultural information would be required before any works were undertaken.

19. The Applicant, Owen Caldwell was available to answer questions. The following points were raised:

- a) A member sought clarification on how canoeists would continue to access the River Spey. They asked whether any dedicated parking or loading provision would be made available for canoe users. Mr Caldwell explained that discussions during both the current and previous applications had considered opportunities to provide facilities for river users. However, Seafeld Estate, as



landowner, did not support the provision of dedicated canoe access facilities on the land. As a result, the proposals safeguard pedestrian access to the river but do not include loading bays for canoe users.

- b) In response to further questions, it was clarified that Aviemore Community Enterprise leases part of the land nearest the river, but the terms of occupation are understood to be consistent with the landowner's position. The applicant advised that, at present, canoe users typically access the river by parking on nearby roads or by briefly unloading equipment from the car park. While no formal provision exists, Mr Caldwell indicated that his informal practice has generally been to accommodate this where it does not interfere with the operation of the site.
- c) A member asked whether the dangerous trees could be topped or partially retained to preserve potential wildlife roosting habitat. Mr Caldwell advised that the original intention had been to retain the alder, but further assessment of root protection constraints indicated that this was unlikely to be practical. Arboricultural advice suggested that the tree was in relatively poor condition, with an estimated lifespan of only a further five to ten years, making retention less feasible. He added that in relation to standing deadwood, the dead trees would be retained where it was safe to do so. However, one tree that was leaning at a dangerous angle would need to be removed on safety grounds.
- d) A member asked whether designated parking spaces would be provided for people with mobility issues. Mr Caldwell advised that dedicated accessible parking had not been considered practical within the application site. However, they indicated that accessible parking spaces could be provided in the other existing car park on the western side of the Old Bridge Inn.

20. The Planning Officer was invited to come back on points raised during speakers' presentations:

- a) With reference to disabled parking - Highland Council Roads department had not requested one.

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

- a) A member stated that this application failed to address the site's existing parking and access constraints and would make them worse. It would significantly compromise access to the River Spey, an important local recreational facility, by creating conflict between river users, vehicles and



visitors using the proposed picnic area. The site was not capable of safely accommodating both functions. As a result, the proposal has an unacceptable impact on amenity and public access, and therefore he would propose refusal of the application.

- b) A member raised concern about the proposal's impact on public access to the River Spey. They noted that the River Spey is identified as a core path, reflecting a clear commitment to protecting and promoting public access. Although pedestrian access would be maintained, it was unclear how river access would operate in practice, particularly for canoeists and other users who need vehicle access to load and unload equipment. The member considered that the report did not adequately explain where these users would go if access through the site was restricted, and that the issue had not been satisfactorily addressed.

The meeting paused here at 12.37pm for legal advice to take place to identify wording for proposing an amendment.

The meeting reconvened at 12.53pm

22. Bill Lobban proposed an amendment to refuse the application as it was contrary to Policy 8.3, criteria b, c and d, of the Local Development Plan due to its adverse impact on the existing use and function of the site. Furthermore, the proposal would compromise established public access to the River Spey, with no equivalent compensatory provision having been demonstrated. The proposal is also contrary to Policy 2.4 a, as it would have a detrimental impact on the amenity and recreational value of the area. He added that while pedestrian access may technically remain, the practical effect of the proposal would be to diminish the site's longstanding role as a key access point to the River Spey, contrary to the requirement of Policy 3.3 h to maintain and maximise opportunities for responsible outdoor access. Any economic benefits arising from the development do not outweigh these adverse impacts. Derek Ross seconded this.



23. The Committee proceeded to a vote. The results were as follows:

	ORIGINAL MOTION (Officer's Recommendation)	AMENDMENT	ABSTAIN
Sandy Bremner			√
Jackie Brierton	√		
Paul Gibb	√		
Hannah Grist	√		
John Kirk			√
Bill Lobban		√	
Steve Micklewright	√		
Eleanor Mackintosh			√
Fiona McLean	√		
Derek Ross		√	
Michael Williamson	√		
Total	6	2	3

24. The Committee **approved** the application as per the officer's recommendation subject to the conditions in the report.

25. Action Point arising: None

Russell Jones and Duncan Miller returned to the meeting at 12.55pm

Ann Ross, Lauren MacCallum and Geva Blackett returned to the meeting at 1.00pm

Agenda Item 7

Application for Detailed Planning Permission 2026/0179/DET

Erection of cycle stores on plots 33-48 and increase boundary fence height on plots 27-32

At Land 30M NE of Cattanach Drive, Newtonmore

Recommendation: Approve subject to conditions

26. Katherine Donnachie, Planning Officer 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) No intimations made.

28. The Committee were invited to discuss the report. The following point was raised:

- a) A member raised the importance of secure cycle storage if we genuinely want to encourage active travel. Bicycle theft remains a significant issue, often involving organised criminality, and cycles can be very expensive to replace and insure. Good quality, secure facilities can make a real difference in giving people the confidence to choose cycling as an everyday mode of transport.

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

30. Action Point arising: None

Agenda Item 8

AOCB

31. David Berry, Head of Planning and Chief Planning Officer gave the following updates:

a) Local Development Plan (LDP) Update

- i. Call for sites & ideas closed on 12 June - 74 site proposals submitted and approximately 40 other ideas submitted (policy suggestions etc)
- ii. On 3rd July, DPEA confirmed that our gatecheck assessment was complete and that the Evidence Report contains sufficient information to enable preparation of the new LDP.

b) Ballater motorhome application update (2026/0014/DET)

- i. Following Committee on 12 June, the application was referred to Scottish Ministers due to the outstanding objection from SEPA on flood risk grounds. On 10 July, Scottish Ministers notified us that they did not intend to intervene



by issuing a direction to restrict the granting of consent or by calling in the application for their own determination.

- ii. The application was therefore cleared back to us, and the decision notice in line with the Committee's decision has now been issued.

33. The Convener on behalf of the Planning Committee congratulated the team on passing the gatecheck assessment.

34. The Convener raised a motion to move to a confidential session.

Date of next meeting

34. The public business of the meeting concluded at 1.10pm.

35. Date of next meeting 9 October 2026.