Draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting

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

Hybrid

9 October 2026 at 10.00am

Present in person

Paul Gibb (Deputy Convener)
Jackie Brierton
Kenny Deans
Bill Lobban
Lauren MacCallum
Duncan Miller
Sandy Bremner
Peter Cosgrove
John Kirk
Eleanor Mackintosh
Fiona McLean

Apologies

Geva Blackett
Russell Jones (Convener)
Steve Micklewright
Derek Ross
Hannah Grist
Ian McLaren
Ann Ross
Michael Wiliamson

In Attendance

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
Emma Greenlees, Planning Support Officer
Peter Ferguson, Harper MacLeod LLP
Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board

Agenda Item 1

Welcome and apologies

1. Paul Gibb, Planning Committee Deputy Convener welcomed all present 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 28 August 2026 held at Cairngorms National Park Authority, Grantown-on-Spey, were approved with no amendments.

3. There was one action point arising:
   a) At Para 15(i) - Officers report was amended to correctly reference comments from Emma Broderick MSP.

Agenda Item 4

Declarations of interest

4. There were no declarations of interest.

Agenda Item 5

Application for Detailed Planning Permission 2026/0160/DET
Slugain Burn Restoration Project: River channel realignment, habitat restoration, road realignment, revised river crossing and installation of culvert
At Land 1.4KM SW of Inverlaidnan, Carrbridge
Recommendation: Approve subject to conditions

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

6. The Committee were invited to ask the Planning Officer for clarity, and the following points were raised:
   a) A member asked how would gravel build-up in the new pools/channel be prevented? Planning Officer confirmed that sediment deposition would be monitored for at least five years following construction. If monitoring identified issues such as restricted fish passage, mitigation measures would be developed and implemented. The revised bridge design and increased capacity are expected to reduce the risk of gravel accumulation.

b) A member asked if there were any visible archaeological buildings on the site? Planning Officer advised that the known building is outside the application site. She explained that the applicant had provided the requested archaeological information, and an informative will require any archaeological discoveries during construction to be reported. A member noted that a former farmstead and croft house had existed on the site, with little now remaining.

c) A member sought clarity on the Park Authority's role as applicant, and what responsibility would it have for the project after completion? Planning Officer advised that the project was being delivered through the Cairngorms 2030 Programme with support from the landowner and partner organisations. Responsibility for the new road and watercourse crossing was expected to transfer to Highland Council following adoption.

d) A member asked if any enforcement action could be taken against the applicant if planning conditions were not complied with? Peter Ferguson, Harper McLeod LLP advised that planning enforcement generally would be directed at the landowner in the first instance.

e) A member asked if Condition 9 could be amended to include monitoring of salmon or other species, rather than focusing solely on sediment erosion and deposition? Planning Officer confirmed that Condition 9 could be reworded accordingly. Members supported this addition.

7. Committee were invited to discuss the report. The following points were raised:
   a) None.

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

9. Action Point arising:

   i. **Condition 9 to be amended to include monitoring of aquatic species**

Agenda Item 6

Proposal of application notice (PoAN) PRE/2026/0025
Proposed new 400kV substation and underground cable connection comprising new buildings, platform, plant and machinery, access, laydown/ work compound area(s),

drainage, landscaping, track upgrades and installations, underground cabling and other ancillary works (National Development)
At Land south of the A86, Strathmashie, Laggan, Newtonmore
Recommendation: Note the PoAN and feedback any comments on additional relevant issues to be addressed in any future planning application

10. Heather Boswell, Senior Planning Officer presented the paper to the committee.

11. The Committee were invited to ask the Planning Officer for clarity, and the following points were raised:
    b) No questions

12. The Committee were invited to discuss the report. The following points were raised:
    a) No intimations made.

13. The Committee **noted the PoAN.**

14. Action Point arising: None.

Agenda Item 7

For information
National Planning Improvement Framework (NPIF) Progress Report
Recommendation: Note the progress in delivering the NPIF Improvement Action Plan

15. David Berry, Head of Planning and Chief Planning Officer presented the paper to the committee.

16. The Committee were invited to ask for clarity, and the following points were raised:
    a) A member asked if Board Members would be involved in the developers' forum and similar stakeholder engagement activities? Head of Planning and Chief Planning Officer advised that the developers' forum was reconvened last year and that the Planning Committee Convener is invited to attend and participate.
    b) A member queried why actions 10 and 11 were still in progress, and would the forthcoming Community Gathering result in more structured Community Council engagement? Head of Planning and Chief Planning Officer acknowledged that Community Council engagement had not progressed as

quickly as desired. A planning workshop would be held at the upcoming Community Gathering to support engagement with community councils and groups, explain planning processes, and seek views on the most effective mechanisms for ongoing community involvement. It was agreed that the date of the Gathering would be circulated to members separately.

c) A member noted that NatureScot's biodiversity metric is currently out for consultation and asked if any training was planned on biodiversity net gain for both Board Members and developers ahead of the new requirements? Head of Planning and Chief Planning Officer confirmed that they are engaging with the consultation on the proposed biodiversity metric and agreed that training would be beneficial. Sessions for both the Developers' Forum and Board Members would be considered once there was greater clarity on the final requirements.

d) A member asked if there was evidence that the improvement programme was making the planning application process easier for applicants, and how was that being measured? Head of Planning and Chief Planning Officer advised that representatives from the development industry were involved in the original performance review and helped develop the improvement action plan. Progress updates would continue to be shared with stakeholders, and further feedback sought to assess whether applicants have experienced improvements. Developer feedback has already informed actions, including work with the Scottish Government to address limitations within the e-development portal.

e) A member asked if feedback was routinely sought from individual applicants on their experience of the planning process? Head of Planning and Chief Planning Officer confirmed that the Authority operates a customer satisfaction survey and also participates in the Improvement Service's annual customer feedback survey. These processes are used to gather and monitor feedback from planning applicants and other service users.

f) A member raised concern that the planning process was becoming too complex and costly, particularly for low-cost housing developments, and asked what could be done to simplify it? Head of Planning and Chief Planning Officer acknowledged concerns regarding the complexity and cost of planning requirements, noting that some surveys are necessary to meet statutory obligations. While wider reforms may be beyond the Authority's control, efforts would continue to focus on providing clear guidance, improving

communication with applicants, and making the planning process as straightforward to navigate as possible.

17. The Committee were invited to discuss the report. The following point was raised:
    g) None.

18. The Committee **noted** the report.

19. Action Point arising:
    i. **Date of upcoming Community Gathering to be circulated to members.**

Agenda Item 8

AOCB

20. There were no items of business presented.

21. The Deputy Convener raised a motion to move to a confidential session.

Date of next meeting

22. The public business of the meeting concluded at 10.50am

23. Date of next meeting 13 November 2026.