Committee report

Development proposed:

Erection of 12 serviced apartments and a manager's apartment (13 apartments in total), installation of associated infrastructure, at Braemar Lodge, 6 Glenshee Road, Braemar, Aberdeenshire.

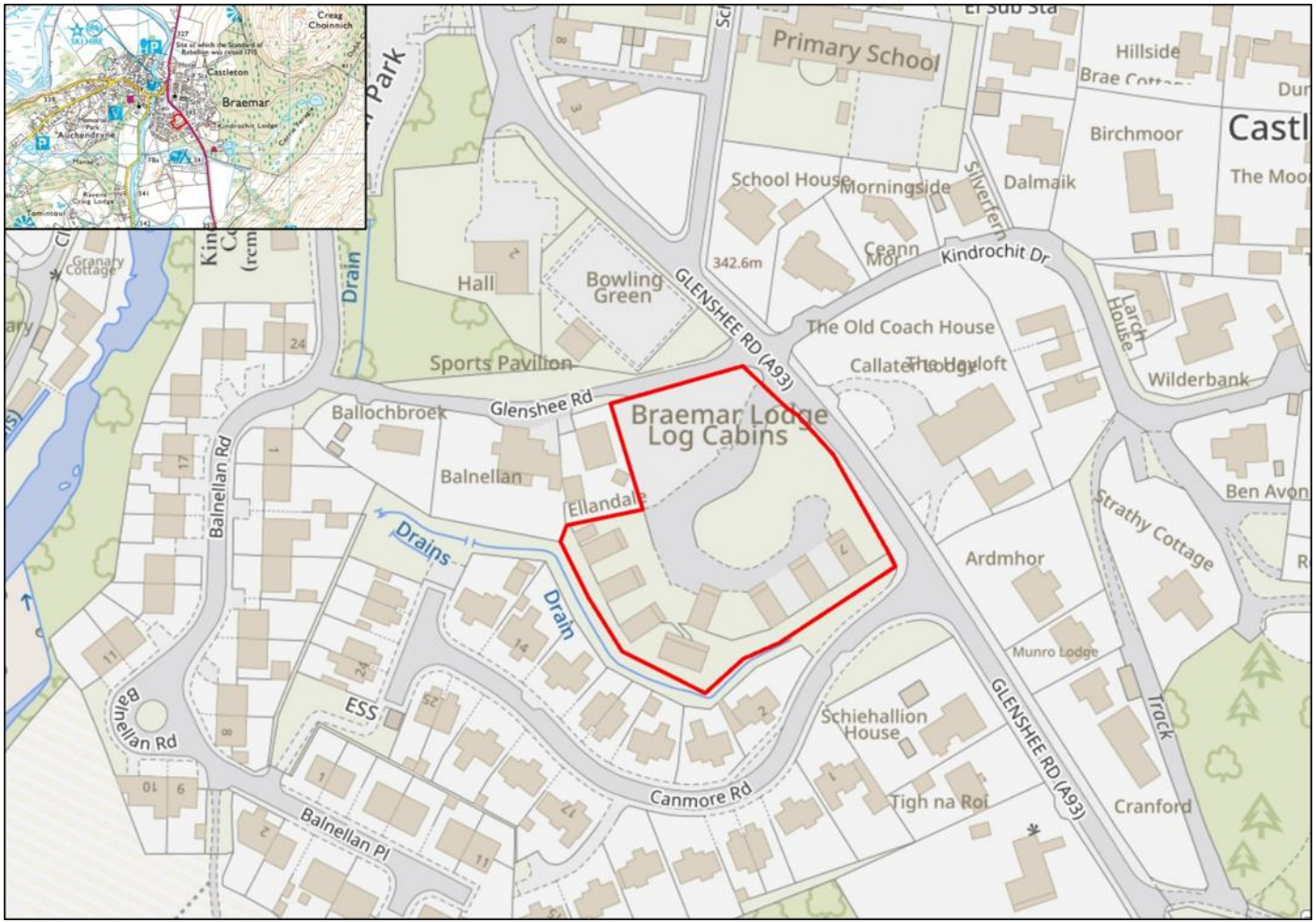
Reference: 2026/0122/DET

Applicant: Braigh Mharr Limited

Date called-in: 13/04/2026

Recommendation: Approve subject to recommended conditions

Case officer: Heather Boswell, Senior Planning Officer



This map has been produced to aid in the statutory process of dealing with planning applications. The map is to help identify the site and its surroundings and to aid Planning Officers, Committee Members and the Public in the determination of the proposal. Maps shown in the Planning Committee Report can only be used for the purposes of the Planning Committee. Any other use risks infringing Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Maps produced within this Planning Committee Report can only be reproduced with the express permission of the Cairngorms National Park Authority and other Copyright holders. This permission must be granted in advance.

Site description, proposal and history

Site description

1. The application site comprises the former Braemar Lodge Hotel site at 6 Glenshee Road, Braemar, AB35 5YQ. The site is approximately 0.57 hectares (1.41 acres) and is located on the southwestern side of Glenshee Road approximately 225 metres south of the Old Military Road/Glenshee Road (A93) Junction and 450 metres from the edge of the settlement to the south.

2. Nine single storey holiday chalets are located to the south of the site with the proposed serviced apartments to be located within the northern portion of the site in the footprint of the former Braemar Lodge Hotel. This Category C listed building was demolished following an extensive fire in 2022, which had left the site in an unsafe condition.

3. A residential development, serviced by Canmore Road, lies to the south of the site and an unnamed, unadopted private road joining Balnellan Road and Glenshee Road lies to the north. Access to the site is gained from Glenshee Road.

4. An open space/lawned area is located in the central portion of the development site where a number of mature trees are present, some of which are included within the Ancient Woodland Inventory. The northern portion of the site is currently considered a vacant, brownfield site. The site falls within the Braemar Conservation Area.

Proposal

5. The drawings and documents associated with this application are listed below and are available on the Cairngorms National Park Authority website unless noted otherwise:
   2026/0122/DET | Erection of 12 serviced apartments and a managers apartment (13 apartments in total), installation of associated infrastructure | Braemar Lodge 6 Glenshee Road Braemar Aberdeenshire

Title	Drawing number	Date on plan*	Date received
Plans			
Plan – Site Location	25150-EMA-XX-XX-DDG-A-040001	17/03/26	10/04/26
Plan – Site Layout	25150-EMA-XX-XX-DDG-A-050001 (REV P11)	03/03/26	16/10/26
Plan – Tree Protection Management	BLH-2603-TP (REV A)	30/03/26	10/04/26
Plan – Ground Floor Plan	25150-EMA-XX-XX-DDG-A-050004	17/03/26	21/08/26
Plan – First Floor Plan	25150-EMA-XX-XX-DDG-A-050005	17/03/26	21/08/26
Plan – Roof Plan	25150-EMA-XX-XX-DDG-A-050006	19/03/26	21/08/26
Plan – Bin Store Plans and Elevations	25150-EMA-XX-XX-DDG-A-050007 (REV P06)	17/03/26	21/08/26
Plan – Draft Drainage Layout Plan	4276:105 (REV C)	01/03/26	21/08/26
Plan – Existing Site Layout & Topo	25150-EMA-XX-XX-DDG-A-050003 (REV P02)	19/03/26	21/08/26
Plan – Presentation Site Layout	25150-EMA-XX-XX-DDG-A-050002 (REV P04)	17/03/26	21/08/26

Plan – Cycle Store Plans and Elevations	25150-EMA-XX-XX-DDG-A-050008 (REV P04)	06/08/24	16/10/26
Plan – Context Site Sections	25150-EMA-XX-XX-DDG-A-050050 (REV P09)	02/03/26	21/08/26
Plan – Elevations 1 of 2	25150-EMA-XX-XX-DDG-A-050100	19/03/26	16/10/26
Plan – Elevations 2 of 2	25150-EMA-XX-XX-DDG-A-030101	19/03/26	21/08/26
Plan – Landscape Proposals	787.01.01b	01/08/26	16/10/26
Supporting information			
Other – Arboricultural Assessment	BLH-2603-AA	02/03/26	10/04/26
Other – Drainage Impact Assessment	Reference number: 4276	26/03/26	10/04/26
Other – Planning Statement		03/04/26	10/04/26
Other – Preliminary Ecological Appraisal	BLH-2602-PEA	31/03/26	10/04/26
Other – Silt Protection Plan	BLH-2603-SP	31/03/26	10/04/26
Other – Tree Survey	BLH-2603-TR-A	31/03/26	10/04/26
Other – Economic Report		01/03/26	29/05/26
Other – Design and Access Statement	25150-EMA-XX-XX-TRP-A-050001-P05	03/04/25	21/08/26

*Where no specific day of month has been provided on the plan, the system defaults to the first of the month.

6. The proposed building is located within the northern portion of the development site, in the footprint of the former Braemar Lodge Hotel, as shown in Appendix 1. It would comprise the erection of 12 serviced apartments and a manager's apartment (13

apartments in total) and the installation of associated infrastructure. The building would be largely two storeys with a partial single storey on the western side.

7. The ground floor of the new development would accommodate five no. 1 bed apartments and two no. 2 bed apartments including the proposed manager's apartment. The first floor would comprise a further five no. 1 bed apartments and one no. 2 bed apartment. All of the apartments would contain an open plan living/dining/kitchen area and a bathroom/shower room.

8. The proposed development has been designed to integrate into Braemar's established local vernacular with traditional slate roof, granite and lime mortar, and stone door and window surrounds proposed. This architectural style, detailing and fenestration reflect that of the wider Braemar Conservation Area. The submitted *Design and Access Statement* (dated 21/08/26) includes visualisations of the proposed development and an appraisal of the surrounding context.

9. Other features of the development include roof-mounted solar panels which will be dark in colour and of an in-roof or integrated design; a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) to manage surface water; the provision of 16 on-site car parking spaces; cycle storage on the western edge of the site; and a bin store at the site entrance.

10. Landscaping and biodiversity enhancement features are also proposed, including Swift nesting bricks, bat roost boxes, tree and shrub planting and sedum roofs on the bin store and cycle storage. The Landscape Proposals, demonstrating the location and extent of planting and siting of biodiversity features proposed, are included at Appendix 1.

History

11. There is a lengthy planning history on the site as follows, with these decisions all having been made by Aberdeenshire Council:

    a) APP/2023/2017 - partially retrospective permission to repair hardstanding and drainage infrastructure alongside boundary treatments. Planning permission granted 05/11/24.

b) APP/2023/0190 - retrospective permission for demolition of fire-damaged building shell. Consent granted on 21/08/24.
c) APP/2023/0189 - retrospective Listed Building consent for demolition of fire-damaged building. Application withdrawn on 16/11/23.
d) TRE/2014/1077 - removal of conifer tree. Consent granted on 03/12/24.
e) APP/2010/3815 & APP/2010/3816 - Planning permission and Listed Building consent for alterations and extension to form dining room extension. Granted on 24/01/11 and 26/01/11.
f) APP/2010/0815 & APP/2010/0817 - Planning permission and Listed Building consent for extension to existing dining room, new kitchen and toilet facilities. Granted on 22/07/10.
g) APP/2007/3117 & APP/2007/3118 - Planning permission and Listed Building consent for extension to existing laundry and storeroom of hotel. Granted on 20/09/07 and 10/10/07.
h) APP/2006/0107 - erection of two chalets (semi-detached). Granted on 06/03/06.
i) APP/2004/0316 - removal of Planning Conditions on permissions: S970851PF; S980067PF; and S000394PF (Condition 03), restricting chalets being disponed separately from hotel planning permission. Granted on 18/06/04.

Habitats Regulations Appraisal

12. A Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) has been undertaken to consider the potential effects of the proposed development upon the conservation objectives of the European sites listed within the HRA document, which is attached as **Appendix 2**. The European sites are:

a) River Dee Special Area of Conservation (SAC); and
b) Ballochbuie Special Protection Area (SPA).

13. Additionally, the HRA assesses the potential impact upon protected species found within this SPA and SAC, including otter, freshwater pearl mussel, Atlantic salmon, capercaillie and Scottish crossbill (breeding).

14. The HRA concludes that there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of the relevant European sites, providing that mitigation measures outlined in the planning application are secured by conditions attached to any planning permission granted.

15. NatureScot have confirmed agreement with the HRA and its conclusions.

Development plan context

Policies

National policy	**National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Scotland 2045** (Policies relevant to the assessment of this application are marked with a cross (x))	
Policy 1	Tackling the climate and nature crises	X
Policy 2	Climate mitigation and adaptation	X
Policy 3	Biodiversity	X
Policy 4	Natural places	X
Policy 5	Soils	
Policy 6	Forestry, woodland and trees	X
Policy 7	Historic assets and places	X
Policy 8	Green belts	
Policy 9	Brownfield, vacant and derelict land, and empty buildings	X
Policy 11	Energy	X
Policy 12	Zero waste	
Policy 13	Sustainable transport	X
Policy 14	Design, quality and place	X
Policy 15	Local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods	
Policy 16	Quality homes	
Policy 17	Rural homes	
Policy 18	Infrastructure first	
Policy 19	Heating and cooling	
Policy 20	Blue and green infrastructure	
Policy 21	Play, recreation and sport	
Policy 22	Flood risk and water management	X
Policy 23	Health and safety	X

Policy 24	Digital infrastructure	
Policy 25	Community wealth building	
Policy 26	Business and industry	X
Policy 27	City, town, local and commercial centres	
Policy 28	Retail	
Policy 29	Rural development	
Policy 30	Tourism	X
Policy 31	Culture and creativity	
Policy 32	Aquaculture	
Policy 33	Minerals	

Strategic policy	**Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2022 – 2027**	
Local plan policy	**Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan (2021)** (Policies relevant to the assessment of this application are marked with a cross (x))	
Policy 1	New housing development	
Policy 2	Supporting economic growth	X
Policy 3	Design and placemaking	X
Policy 4	Natural heritage	X
Policy 5	Landscape	X
Policy 6	The siting and design of digital communications equipment	
Policy 7	Renewable energy	
Policy 8	Open space, sport and recreation	
Policy 9	Cultural heritage	X
Policy 10	Resources	X
Policy 11	Developer obligations	

16. All new development proposals require to be assessed in relation to policies contained in the adopted Development Plan which comprises National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2021 (LDP). The full wording of policies can be found at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/documents/

and at:
https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CNPA-LDP-2021-web.pdf

Planning guidance

17. Supplementary guidance also supports the Local Development Plan and provides more details about how to comply with the policies. Guidance that is relevant to this application is marked with a cross (x).

Policy 1	Housing supplementary guidance	
Policy 2	Supporting economic growth non-statutory guidance	X
Policy 3	Design and placemaking non-statutory guidance	X
Policy 4	Natural heritage non-statutory guidance	X
Policy 5	Landscape non-statutory guidance	X
Policy 7	Renewable energy non-statutory guidance	
Policy 8	Open space, sport and recreation non-statutory guidance	
Policy 9	Cultural heritage non-statutory guidance	X
Policy 10	Resources non-statutory guidance	X
Policy 11	Developer obligations supplementary guidance	

Consultations

18. A summary of the main issues raised by consultees now follows:

19. **NatureScot** confirm agreement with the HRA and its conclusions, noting the presence of natural heritage interests of international importance in proximity to the site, including the River Dee Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Ballochbuie Special Protection Area (SPA) which is designated for Capercaillie and Scottish Crossbilll (breeding).

20. **Scottish Water** raise no objection to the proposal. They note that a Water Capacity Assessment and Waste Water Capacity Assessment will be undertaken once a formal application and Pre-Development Enquiry (PDE) Form has been submitted by the Applicant.

21. **Aberdeenshire Council Built Heritage Officer** initially requested further information to ensure traditional materials were proposed, the design would reflect the traditional character of Braemar and the bin store be relocated within the development site. Following a meeting held with the Applicant, Landscape Advisor, Built Heritage Officer and Case Officer in July, the Applicant provided additional information with design amendments reflecting the matters discussed. The Built Heritage Officer subsequently responded that they welcomed the proposed design amendments and that they consider the proposal acceptable, subject to conditions being attached to any consent granted to control the quality of materials and detailing through material sampling.

22. **Aberdeenshire Council Contaminated Land Officer** recommends that a planning condition be attached to any consent granted ensuring that any contamination discovered during development would be reported to the local planning authority and a suitable scheme for the mitigation agreed and implemented to the satisfaction of the planning authority.

23. **Aberdeenshire Council Environmental Health Officer** initially requested that the Applicant demonstrate the proposed air source heat pump complies with the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) standard. The Applicant subsequently advised within their Consultee Feedback Response (dated 15/06/26) that the proposed development would no longer comprise this type of heating system and instead energy requirements would be met by exhaust air heat pumps, high heat retention storage heaters or Exhaust and Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery warm air system (Nilan Compact P). The Officer subsequently commented on the new heating/ventilation system, noting they had no comments to make given there appears to be no external units proposed. Separately, the Officer has requested that an informative regarding short term lets should be attached to any consent granted.

24. **Aberdeenshire Council Flood Risk and Coast Protection Officer** initially requested the provision of construction details of the surface water soakaways for review. Following the Applicant's submission of additional drainage information relating to the proposed soakaways, the consultee confirmed that they have no flood risk concerns and raise no objection to the development.

25. **Aberdeenshire Council Natural Environment Officer** was consulted prior to the application being called in by the National Park Authority and subsequently deferred to the Park Authority consultees to respond on public access and natural environment matters.

26. **Aberdeenshire Council Roads Development Team** has no objections subject to a condition being attached to secure the car parking spaces proposed as part of the development.

27. **Aberdeenshire Council Waste Management Team** were consulted however have not submitted any comments.

28. **Cairngorms National Park Authority Ecological Advice Officer** notes that the proposal would not result in the loss of ancient woodland and initially welcomed the proposed biodiversity enhancement measures and Landscaping Plan. Following the Applicant's subsequent provision of additional information to address design issues, the Officer queried the removal of key biodiversity features previously proposed on the Landscaping Plan and outlined a number of recommendations to reinstate the proposal's biodiversity offer, as well as recommending changes to the Swift nesting brick positioning. The recommendations were subsequently incorporated and updated plans provided on 16/10/26. The Ecological Advice Officer has confirmed that these updates are acceptable and recommends that a condition is attached to any consent granted to ensure delivery of the biodiversity enhancement measures. Other conditions are recommended in relation to protected species surveys, breeding bird protection, tree protection measures and the submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan to safeguard the River Dee SAC and wider water environment.

29. **Cairngorms National Park Authority Landscape Adviser** initially raised concerns over the scale, massing and siting of the proposed building, suggesting it would appear prominent in views from the north and south. The Advisor also noted the sensitivity of the site due to its location within the Braemar Conservation Area, the Ancient Woodland Inventory, and Lochnagar National Scenic Area, explaining that the building would appear larger than nearby buildings with proposed tree planting insufficient to soften the impact. Other points raised initially included the design of

vehicular areas, bin store location, boundary treatments, and the lack of information on levels, surface materials and associated infrastructure.

30. Following a meeting held with the Applicant, Landscape Advisor, Built Heritage Officer and Case Officer in July, the Applicant provided additional information and revised plans with design amendments including changes to the siting and design of the building. The Advisor subsequently noted that, whilst adverse landscape and visual effects remain, the planting proposed on the northern edge of the site would soften these effects. Changes to the building's roof line would retain more of the views to the hills beyond Braemar and decrease the massing of the building in views from the north. In addition, the stone wall boundary treatment, improved bin store design and planting establishment and maintenance all meet the required standard (BS EN ISO 11091). The Advisor recommends that conditions are attached to any consent granted requiring the provision of further information relating to associated infrastructure such as lighting, ground levels, footpaths and vehicular area materials.

31. **Cairngorms National Park Authority Recreation and Outdoor Access Team** has no objection to the proposed development. They request that the pedestrian access along the lane to the north of the site, linking Glenshee Road and Balnellan Road, should remain open and accessible during development. They also initially flagged a concern about lack of cycle storage and stands in the proposed plans. The Applicant subsequently provided plans incorporating cycle storage to the west of the site and, following a further response from the Team, agreed to increase the height of the cycle storage from 1.2m to 1.8m in line with the recommended standard, as shown in Cycle Store Plans and Elevations (dated 16/10/26). The Team note some concerns regarding the proposed sedum roof on the cycle storage, querying the potential for debris and water ingress affecting the bicycles stored below and highlighting the tendency for turfed roofs to become overgrown without regular maintenance.

32. **Braemar Community Council** objects to the application raising concerns over the car parking provision, lack of additional facilities offered on site beyond accommodation, building materials, local infrastructure in Braemar and over-development. Detail of the Community Council's response is set out in **Appendix 3**.

Representations

33. Eight letters of representation have been received consisting of one general letter, one letter of support, and six objections, including one supplementary objection from the same individual. The representations are contained within **Appendix 4a; 4b and 4c**.

34. The general representation, provided on behalf of the Aberdeenshire South Access Panel, requests that provision be made for anyone with a disability within the development, explaining that UK-wide, disabled people have a disposable income of £50 billion and encouraging the development to benefit from this significant market sector.

35. The letter of support sets out the need for accessible accommodation within the development and explains the Applicant's architect to have intimated that it is their intention to review the internal layouts of the development to ensure compliance with accessible accommodation requirements.

36. Key concerns raised in the six objection letters include:

    a) lack of communication and engagement with the local community in the design of the development;
    b) the potential visual dominance of the proposal due to its design, scale and massing and whether it would appear out of place within the Braemar Conservation Area;
    c) potential impacts on neighbouring amenity, including overshadowing, overlooking, loss of privacy, noise and construction-related disturbance;
    d) non-compliance with the place making, cultural heritage and sustainable development policies of NPF4, the Cairngorms National Park LDP and the National Park Partnership Plan;
    e) concerns over the use, sourcing and appearance of the proposed material palette for the development;
    f) concern that the proposal does not address the local need for affordable housing, key worker housing and accommodation for permanent residents;
    g) preference for a mixed-use scheme which incorporates affordable housing and delivers greater community benefit;

h) concerns over imbalance between tourism-related uses and permanent residential occupation within the village;
i) concern over cumulative effects of tourism-related development within the village and whether Braemar's infrastructure, including local healthcare and emergency services, can accommodate additional demand generated by further visitor accommodation;
j) concern over additional pressure on the hospitality sector due to the loss of the former hotel's dining area and limited range of facilities that cater to tourists;
k) concern over the type of planting and shrubs proposed for the compensatory landscape given Braemar's climate;
l) concern over the removal of air source heat pump heating and the type of heating now proposed;
m) concern over adequacy of the proposed parking provision, as well as potential for increased pressure on surrounding roads and parking areas;
n) concerns over visitors' reliance on private car use due to limited public transport options and insufficient active travel facilities and cycle storage proposed; and
o) concern the development could worsen existing surface water and flooding issues.

Appraisal

37. Section 25 of the 1997 Act as amended requires applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan. This comprises National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2021 (LDP). Where there is conflict between policies, NPF4 policies take precedence.

38. The main planning considerations in relation to this application comprise: the principle of development; landscape, design and placemaking; natural environment and biodiversity; transport and active travel; health and safety and contaminated land; and water environment. These matters are considered in detail below.

Principle of development

39. **NPF4 Policy 1: Tackling the climate and nature crises** seeks to ensure that significant weight will be given to the global climate and nature crises when

considering all development proposals. **NPF4 Policy 2: Climate mitigation and adaptation** also seeks to encourage development that adapts to the current and future impacts of climate change, supporting proposals which contribute towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

40. **NPF4 Policy 9: Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings** encourages the redevelopment of brownfield, vacant and derelict sites, maximising the use of existing assets and minimising additional land take.

41. **NPF4 Policy 26: Business and industry** supports development proposals that contribute positively to the economy, provide employment opportunities and are proposed on sites allocated for those uses in the LDP.

42. **NPF4 Policy 30: Tourism** seeks to ensure development proposals for new or extended tourist facilities or accommodation in locations identified in the LDP are supported.

43. **LDP Policy 2: Supporting economic growth** supports proposals for tourist accommodation where they have no adverse impacts on the site or neighbouring areas, contribute to the provision of a wide range of visitor accommodation options and support a year-round economy. The **LDP Settlement Statement** for Braemar also includes a specific settlement objective to 'support opportunities to enhance and diversify the local economy, enhance the role of tourism and improve car parking provision'.

44. This application is considered to comply with these policy requirements. The proposal seeks to redevelop a brownfield site, which cannot reasonably return to a natural state without intervention, restoring it to a productive use as tourist accommodation. This would reduce pressure for development on greenfield land and avoid additional land take, which is considered a sustainable approach to development. Whilst the 2021 LDP was published prior to the Braemar Lodge Hotel fire and subsequent demolition in 2022 and therefore does not specifically identify the site for future tourist development, the proposed use generally aligns with the wider aims of the LDP. The development would be located within the existing

settlement of Braemar which has established tourism services and would thus make efficient use of existing infrastructure.

45. Moreover, the development would provide employment opportunities during both the construction and operation of the serviced apartments and would extend the tourist accommodation offer within the village. Through direct investment in visitor accommodation and indirect economic benefits associated with increased visitor expenditure within Braemar's businesses, services and attractions, the proposal would support the local economy. As such, the proposal would directly contribute towards delivery of the settlement objective which seeks to enhance and diversify the local economy and enhance the role of tourism within Braemar.

46. Overall, the principle of development is therefore in accordance with relevant policies of the Development Plan.

Landscape, design and placemaking

47. **NPF4 Policy 7: Historic assets and places** supports development proposals that protect and enhance the historic environment and preserve the character and appearance of conservation areas, by ensuring the existing natural and built features which contribute to the character of the conservation area and its setting are retained.

48. **NPF4 Policy 11: Energy** supports low-carbon and renewable energy infrastructure, including energy generation.

49. **NPF4 Policy 14: Design, quality and place** supports the delivery of proposals where they are consistent with the six qualities of successful places, namely: healthy; pleasant; connected; distinctive; sustainable; and adaptable.

50. **LDP Policy 3: Design and placemaking** also seeks to ensure that proposals improve the quality of the area and are consistent with the six qualities of successful places. A minor discrepancy between NPF4's definition of the six qualities and that of the LDP exists, although their overall effect is consistent.

51. **LDP Policy 5: Landscape** seeks to conserve and/or enhance the landscape character and special landscape qualities of the National Park. The policy states that proposals that do not complement or enhance the landscape character will only be permitted where any significant adverse effects on special landscape qualities are clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance. All adverse effects on the setting of the proposal should also have been minimised and mitigated through appropriate siting, layout, scale, design and construction.

52. **LDP Policy 9: Cultural heritage** seeks to ensure developments preserve or enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas and use design, materials, scale and layout appropriate to the site and its setting.

53. The proposed development has been designed with due cognisance of the former Braemar Lodge Hotel, which occupied the site until 2022. The proposal seeks to sensitively redevelop the existing brownfield site, recognising its former listed building status and location within the Braemar Conservation Area.

54. The building's proposed scale, massing, façade and design have been developed through conversation with the Applicant, Built Heritage and Landscape consultees to ensure that the proposal is designed to be pleasant, distinctive and sustainable. Minor amendments have been made to the initial siting, layout and design, and these represent embedded mitigation and help to reduce the perceived massing of the building. The proposed building occupies a smaller footprint than the former Braemar Lodge Hotel and, notwithstanding Braemar Community Council's consultee response which considers the proposal to constitute overdevelopment, the proposed scale and massing demonstrate a rationalisation of the built form on site compared to the previous development. The Applicant has incorporated requested amendments to alter the roof line, set the building further back within the development site to introduce a landscape buffer and allow tree planting along the northern edge, and these amendments will help to ensure that the development's appearance will be softened when viewed from the north. Together these amendments prevent the development from appearing visually intrusive whilst also respecting the local setting and ensuring the development sits comfortably within the Braemar Conservation Area.

55. Whilst the Built Heritage and Landscape consultees initially requested the relocation of the bin store away from the site entrance, it is understood that this location is most practicable in terms of waste collection. Construction materials for both the bin store and cycle storage mirror those used across the wider site which, together with the structure's sensitive design, will reduce their visual prominence. Both consultees consider this an acceptable approach. The full specification of the bin store and cycle storage, including details of the sedum roof structure and materials, will be conditioned if planning permission is granted.

56. The proposed granite, slate and lime mortar are considered to reflect the design elements and style of traditional properties throughout Braemar, ensuring the development integrates successfully within the existing village context. This material palette would preserve the character of the conservation area and be in-keeping with the local vernacular, contributing to the local sense of place. A condition would be attached to any consent granted to ensure samples of the external material palette are provided for approval prior to commencement of development. Similarly, material specifications for the gravel vehicular areas and footpaths would be conditioned.

57. Whilst the building would occupy a smaller footprint than the former Braemar Lodge Hotel, impacts upon the local setting, Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs) and Lochnagar National Scenic Area are anticipated given the introduction of a building on a currently vacant plot. Alterations to the roof line have been successful in retaining more of the views to the hills beyond Braemar and reducing the massing of the building seen in views from the north, however it is expected that certain adverse effects on visual permeability relative to the previous building remain. Despite this, the development is expected to preserve the significance and setting of the conservation area with the proposed layout and appearance contributing positively to the area's character and conserving the SLQs of the National Park. Again, a planning condition requiring the approval of final ground levels and lighting details would be attached to any consent granted to ensure the associated infrastructure is appropriate to the setting.

58. The siting and orientation of the proposed building reflects that of the former Braemar Lodge Hotel and prevents significant issues of overlooking, overshadowing and loss of privacy of any adjacent properties.

59. In addition, the proposal's design aligns with the requirements of NPF4 Policy 11 by incorporating low and zero carbon generating technologies with the inclusion of solar panels demonstrating the proposal's sustainability credentials and subsequent compliance with NPF4 Policy 14 and LDP Policy 3 qualities of successful places. A condition would be attached to any consent granted requiring the solar panel specification details/ brochure to be submitted for approval prior to the building's construction.

60. On balance, with the embedded mitigation and conditions outlined above, the development is considered appropriate in terms of scale, massing and design and will integrate successfully within Braemar whilst respecting the existing character of the conservation area.

Natural environment and biodiversity

61. **NPF4 Policy 3: Biodiversity** seeks to ensure that development proposals protect biodiversity, reverse biodiversity loss, deliver positive effects from development and strengthen nature networks. Development proposals must include appropriate measures to conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, in accordance with national and local guidance.

62. **NPF4 Policy 4: Natural places** seeks to ensure that development proposals protect, restore and enhance natural assets making best use of nature-based solutions. Development that has significant adverse impacts on designated sites, after mitigation, will not be supported. Similarly, **LDP Policy 4: Natural heritage** seeks to ensure that there are no adverse effects on European Protected Species and other biodiversity interests.

63. **NPF4 Policy 6: Forestry, woodland and trees** seeks to protect and expand forests, woodland and trees. This policy states that development proposals will not be supported where they result in any loss of ancient woodlands, ancient and veteran trees, or adverse impact on their ecological condition.

64. The proposed development is not anticipated to result in adverse effects on protected species, habitats or designated sites. The site's current brownfield status and absence of notable biodiversity features limits the scope for adverse impacts arising as a result of the proposal. The Park Authority's Ecological Advice Officer notes that whilst part of the development site was previously recorded as ancient woodland on the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI), most of the site has been developed and no longer contains woodland habitat. As a result, there would be no impact upon this designation. 12 of the 13 trees currently present on site would be retained with the removal of one damaged Silver Birch. This Category U tree is recommended for replacement as part of the proposed planting, which confirms the proposal's approach in avoiding biodiversity loss. A condition will be attached to any consent granted to ensure the development is constructed in line with the submitted Tree Survey Report (dated 10/04/26).

65. Additional ecological mitigation measures are proposed within the application documentation, and these measures will be secured through planning conditions to ensure the development protects species and habitats on-site. Conditions will include the restriction of works during bird breeding season, unless under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist, the requirement for pre-construction species checks for red squirrel and the provision of a finalised Ecological Management Plan.

66. As outlined in the Landscape Proposals (dated 16/10/26), various biodiversity enhancement measures are proposed which would deliver positive effects from the development and strengthen nature networks. The proposed implementation of Swift nesting bricks, bat roost boxes, sedum roofs and planting, as well as their associated upkeep and maintenance, would be secured through conditions attached to any consent granted.

67. The proposal is therefore in accordance with the relevant biodiversity and natural places policies of the Development Plan.

Transport and active travel

68. **NPF4 Policy 13: Sustainable transport** supports development proposals that reduce reliance on private vehicles and promote sustainable travel choices.

69. **LDP Policy 3: Design and placemaking** seeks to ensure developments include space for off-street parking and promote sustainable transport methods and active travel, including making provision for the storage of bicycles and reducing the need to travel.

70. The proposal is considered to be in a sustainable location within the settlement of Braemar with convenient access to local services and facilities. The development includes the provision of 16 on-site car parking spaces, which Aberdeenshire Council's Roads Development Team consider sufficient for a development of this scale. Opportunities also exist for visitors and employees to utilise public transport and active travel methods, thereby reducing reliance upon private car use. The development site benefits from a highly walkable location, whilst the proposal's provision of cycle storage would facilitate other sustainable modes of transport, allowing guests and employees to access local services and amenities through active travel means. Conditions would be attached to any consent granted to ensure delivery of the proposed car parking and cycle storage and to ensure maintenance of the sedum roof of the cycle store so that this biodiversity feature does not impede access or use.

71. As requested by the Park Authority's Recreation and Outdoor Access Team, a condition would also be attached to the consent to ensure pedestrian access along the lane to the north of the site, linking Glenshee Road and Balnellan Road, remains open and accessible during development, or that an appropriate diversion is agreed and implemented for the duration of the construction period.

72. On this basis the application is considered to comply with NPF4 Policy 13 and LDP Policy 3.

Health and safety and contaminated land

73. **NPF4 Policy 23: Health and safety** sets out that development which is likely to have a significant adverse effect on health or air quality, or which is likely to raise unacceptable noise issues, will not be supported.

74. **LDP Policy 10: Resources** considers development affecting contaminated land favourably where assessments are undertaken to establish actual and potential impacts, and effective remedial action is taken to ensure the site is made suitable for the development proposed.

75. Whilst the submitted application information does not indicate the presence of contaminated material on site, the brownfield nature of the development site increases the potential for this. A condition will therefore be attached to any consent granted requiring the provision of a scheme to deal with potential contamination and setting out the approach to be adopted should contaminated material be discovered during construction.

76. The provision of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Construction Method Statement (CMS) will also be conditioned. This will ensure health and safety standards are upheld throughout the construction period, and construction activities are conducted in accordance with industry best practice, thus minimising potential amenity impacts.

77. On this basis the application is considered to comply with NPF4 Policy 23 and LDP Policy 10.

Water environment

78. **NPF4 Policy 22: Flood risk and water management** seeks to ensure that development is resilient to current and future flood risk and is supported by appropriate water and drainage infrastructure.

79. The proposal is not considered to present an unacceptable risk of flooding and can be adequately served by suitable drainage and water infrastructure. As set out within the submitted Drainage Impact Assessment (dated 10/04/26) and Drainage Layout Plan (dated 21/08/26), a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) will be

implemented to manage surface water and soakaways and avoid increasing flood risk on site and elsewhere.

80. The proposal is therefore considered capable of effectively managing flood risk, surface water drainage and protecting the water environment from pollution, thus aligning with the Development Plan.

Other issues raised by consultees

81. The majority of issues raised by consultees and contributors have been addressed throughout this report however outstanding comments are considered below.

82. The application must be assessed on its own merits and therefore the perceived lack of additional facilities on site and individuals' preferences for a mixed-use scheme incorporating affordable housing are not directly relevant to the determination of this application.

83. Given the nature of the development, an increase in demand for local GP appointments, healthcare provision and school capacity is not anticipated as a result of the proposal. In line with the LDP Supplementary Guidance: Policy 11 – Developer Obligations, commercial developments do not require developer contributions towards education or healthcare provision.

84. Although concerns about the potential imbalance between tourism-related uses and permanent residential occupation within the village as well as cumulative effects of tourism-related development are noted, as highlighted previously, supporting opportunities to enhance and diversify the local economy and enhance the role of tourism in Braemar is noted as one of the LDP's Braemar settlement objectives. The proposed development is considered to support this objective.

85. Whilst temporary noise disturbance may occur during the construction phase, any adverse impacts upon the adjacent bowling green are expected to be short-term and temporary. The proposed development is therefore not expected to adversely affect this recreational amenity.

86. The requirement for accessible accommodation, as raised by the Aberdeenshire South Access Panel representation, will be managed through the Building Standards process in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Conclusion

87. The proposed development of 12 serviced apartments and a manager's apartment on the site of the former Braemar Lodge Hotel in Braemar is acceptable in principle given the economic benefits associated with the redevelopment of this brownfield site. The proposal presents a development sensitive to its position and reflecting the local vernacular and character of the Braemar Conservation Area. In addition, the proposal incorporates various landscaping and biodiversity enhancement features which will both soften the visual impact of the building and deliver positive biodiversity effects, strengthening nature networks.

88. The air source heat pump heating system was omitted from the scheme and an alternative internal form of heating is now proposed. This is not material in the consideration of this planning application.

89. On balance, it is considered that the proposed development complies with the Development Plan and there are no other material considerations which outweigh this conclusion.

Recommendation

That members of the committee support a recommendation to APPROVE the erection of 12 serviced apartments and a manager's apartment (13 apartments in total), installation of associated infrastructure at Braemar Lodge, 6 Glenshee Road, Braemar, subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

Those conditions listed below in bold text are suspensive conditions, which require to be discharged prior to implementation of the development.

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years, beginning with the date on which the permission is granted.

   Reason: The time limit condition is imposed in order to comply with the requirements of section 58(1)(b) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended.

2. The development hereby approved shall be constructed in line with the approved plans, notwithstanding the reference to Air Source Heat Pumps in the submitted *Planning Statement* (dated 10/04/26) as this aspect of the development has been omitted from the scheme and does not form part of any planning permission hereby granted.

   Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in an approved form and to safeguard the visual amenity and character of the area in accordance with Policy 14: Design, quality and place of NPF4 and Policy 3: Design and placemaking of the Cairngorms Local Development Plan 2021.

3. The development hereby approved shall be constructed in line with the submitted Tree Protection Management Plan (dated 10/04/26) and Tree Survey Report (10/04/26), including Arboricultural Method Statement, and shall include replacement planting where any trees are identified for removal, e.g. damaged Category U Silver Birch (as per Tree Survey dated 10/04/26).

   Reason: To ensure construction is undertaken in line with best practice and to ensure the protection of retained trees throughout the construction period, in accordance with Policy 6: Forestry, woodland and trees of NPF4 and Policy 4: Natural heritage of the Cairngorms Local Development Plan 2021.

4. **No development shall commence on site until a finalised Ecological Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as planning authority. The Ecological Management Plan shall be informed by the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and shall include, but not be limited to the specification and location of the biodiversity enhancement measures to be employed throughout the development, including but not limited to the installation of six integrated Swift nesting bricks and three Bat roost boxes.**

   Thereafter the development shall be implemented strictly in accordance with the approved Ecological Management Plan including mitigation measures.

   Reason: To minimise negative impacts upon local habitat, environments and priority species, and to ensure the development improves habitat connectivity and enhances biodiversity in accordance with Policy 3: Biodiversity and Policy 4: Natural places of NPF4 and Policy 4: Natural heritage of the Cairngorms Local Development Plan 2021.

5. **No development shall commence on site until pre-construction species checks and surveys are carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist for red squirrel and breeding birds (if works are to be undertaken during the breeding bird season of March to August, inclusive). The results from the surveys shall be submitted to the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as planning authority. If the results indicate protected species are present then appropriate Species Protection Plans (SPP) shall be submitted to and approved by the Cairngorms National Park Authority.**

   Thereafter, all mitigation measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved SPPs and overseen by a suitably qualified Ecological Clerk of Works.

   Reason: To ensure that there are no adverse effects on protected species, that the construction of the development is satisfactorily implemented and supervised in accordance with Policy 3: Biodiversity and Policy 4: Natural places of NPF4 and Policy 4: Natural heritage of the Cairngorms Local Development Plan 2021.

6. **No development shall commence on site until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as planning authority. The CEMP shall include, but not be limited to, the following:**

   a) **Detail on the site-specific Construction Method Statement and related Site Plan to be implemented to protect the River Spey SAC from pollution events;**
   b) **Detail on the site-specific pollution-prevention measures to be implemented and the agreed incident response approach, as outlined in the Silt Protection Plan (dated 10/04/26), to protect the Clunie Water (River Dee SAC) and the water environment from sources of pollution such as oils, fuels etc;**
   c) **Detail on the elements relating to groundworks, soil excavation and storage, to be implemented; and**
   d) **Details of how private water supplies within the development site will be protected during construction and operation of the proposed development.**

   The CEMP shall require the contractor to employ established industry standard best practice in relation to earthworks, including excavation and storage.

   Thereafter, the development shall be constructed strictly in accordance with the approved CEMP to the satisfaction of the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as planning authority.

   Reason: To ensure best practice measures are adopted throughout the construction phase and construction of the proposed development strictly follows habitat protection and protects the water environment and designated sites in accordance with Policy 3: Biodiversity, Policy 4: Natural places and Policy 5: Soils of NPF4 and Policy 4: Natural heritage and Policy 5: Landscape of the Cairngorms Local Development Plan 2021.

7. **No development shall commence on the construction of any buildings until the full specification of the bin store and cycle storage has been submitted to and agreed in writing with the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as**

planning authority. The bin store and cycle storage specification shall outline how the sedum roofs will be implemented as well as providing details of the sedum roof structure and materials to be employed which should meet the approved industry standard.

Thereafter, the bin store and cycle storage shall be built in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the bin store and cycle storage facilities are constructed to a high standard which promotes ease of use and prevents damage caused by water/debris ingress, in line with Policy 14: Design, quality and place of NPF4 and Policy 3: Design and placemaking of the Cairngorms Local Development Plan 2021.

8. **No development shall commence on site until a finalised Maintenance Schedule has been submitted to and agreed in writing with the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as planning authority. The Maintenance Plan shall include, but not be limited to the following:**

   a) **Details on the proposed upkeep and maintenance of the planting, hard and soft landscaping on site including plans to replace any planting which, within five years and in the opinion of the planning authority is dying, being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased. Replacement planting shall be by plants of similar size and species to those originally required; and**
   b) **Detail of the proposed planting, upkeep and maintenance of the bin store and cycle storage sedum roofs.**

   Thereafter, the works shall be undertaken, implemented and maintained in accordance with the approved Maintenance Schedule.

   Reason: To ensure the development conserves and enhances the landscape and biodiversity in accordance with Policy 4: Natural places and Policy 13: Sustainable transport of NPF4 and Policy 3: Design and placemaking and Policy 5: Landscape of the Cairngorms Local Development Plan 2021.

9. **No development shall commence on site until a scheme to deal with potential contamination has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as planning authority in consultation with Aberdeenshire Council Contaminated Land Team.**

   Thereafter, the scheme shall be implemented, completed and, if required, monitoring measurements put in place, to the satisfaction of the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as planning authority.

   Reason: To ensure that the site is suitable for redevelopment, given the nature of previous uses/processes on the site in accordance with Policy 9: Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings of NPF4 and Policy 10: Resources of the Cairngorms Local Development Plan 2021.

10. The lane to the north of the site, connecting Balnellan Road and Glenshee Road should remain open and accessible during development. Where this is not possible, details of the proposed pedestrian diversion should be set out in an Access Management Plan submitted to and approved in writing by the Cairngorms National Park Authority, acting as planning authority, prior to the commencement of development.

    Thereafter, the approved Access Management Plan shall be implemented in full throughout the construction period.

    Reason: To ensure the proposed access arrangements are appropriate, maintain public safety and are in accordance with Policy 13: Sustainable transport and Policy 23: Health and safety of NPF4 and Policy 3: Design and placemaking of the Cairngorms Local Development Plan 2021.

11. **No development shall commence on site until a finalised Drainage Layout Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Cairngorms National Park Authority, acting as planning authority, in consultation with the Aberdeenshire Council Flood Risk and Coast Protection Officer.**

    Thereafter construction and maintenance of the drainage system shall be undertaken in line with the Drainage Impact Assessment (dated 10/04/26) and

approved Drainage Layout Plan. Where construction is unable to be undertaken in accordance with the approved details, the Applicant shall stop works and contact the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as planning authority, in consultation with the Aberdeenshire Council Flood Risk and Coast Protection Team to agree a way forward.

Reason: In the interests of flood risk management and to ensure compliance with NPF4 Policy 22: Flood risk and water management and Policy 10: Resources of the Cairngorms Local Development Plan 2021.

12. **No development shall commence on the construction of any buildings until samples of the proposed granite, slate, and a physical lime sample and specification has been submitted to, and the external material palette approved in writing by, the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as planning authority in consultation with Aberdeenshire Council Built Heritage Team. The lime specification should include details on the lime strength, mix ratio, aggregate source, and grading, as well as showing the proposed application method.**

    Thereafter the development shall thereafter be constructed in accordance with the approved details.

    Reason: To ensure the development complements and enhances the landscape and preserves the character and appearance of the Braemar Conservation Area in accordance with Policy 7: Historic assets and places, and Policy 14: Design, quality and place of the National Planning Framework 4 and Policy 3: Design and placemaking, and Policy 5: Landscape of the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2021.

13. **No development shall commence on the construction of any buildings until the full specification details/ brochure for the proposed solar panels has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as planning authority in consultation with Aberdeenshire Council Built Heritage Team. The solar panel specification should demonstrate**

they will be sunken into the roof profile to reduce prominence and have an anti-glare finish.

Thereafter the development shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the development complements and enhances the landscape and preserves the character and appearance of the Braemar Conservation Area in accordance with Policy 7: Historic assets and places, and Policy 14: Design, quality and place of the National Planning Framework 4 and Policy 3: Design and placemaking, and Policy 5: Landscape of the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2021.

14. **No development shall commence on site until a Lighting Design Strategy for the building and associated parking areas has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as planning authority. The strategy shall detail the position, type and intensity of the proposed lighting, noting discrete, low level, directional lighting is preferred around parking areas.**

    Prior to operation, all external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the approved strategy, and no other external lighting shall be installed without prior express consent from the planning authority.

    Reason: To protect the amenity of neighbouring residents in accordance with Policy 14: Design, quality and place of NPF4 and Policy 3: Design and placemaking of the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2021.

15. **No development shall commence on site until a finalised Landscaping Plan and full detailed landscape specification has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as planning authority. The finalised Landscaping Plan shall reflect the principles of the submitted Landscape Proposals (dated 16/10/26) and shall include, but not be limited to, the following:**

    a) **Detail of the finish, material and appearance of the proposed footpaths;**

b) **Confirmation of the ground levels across site, provided in the form of a series of spot heights or a contour drawing, particularly around areas of localised changes in height e.g. at the site entrance;**
c) **Detail of the finish, material and appearance of the proposed gravel vehicular area;**
d) **Detail of the proposed maintenance of the gravel area including the approach to be adopted to prevent ingress of stone chips onto the pavement and public highway;**
e) **Detail on the timeframe, location, number and species of tree, scrub and grasses mix to be planted, noting the planning authority's expectation that planting be completed within the first full planting season following completion of the development;**
f) **Detail of the finalised woodland mixes proposed, noting that new planting should comprise native species of suitable origin and be managed to enhance biodiversity and reflect the species typical of the localised landscape.;**
g) **Detailed information on the biodiversity enhancement measures to be implemented including the position and type of six integral Swift nesting bricks and Bat roost boxes; and**
h) **Detailed information on the measures to be implemented which will ensure the protection of existing trees to be retained.**

Thereafter, the development shall be constructed in accordance with the approved finalised Landscaping Plan to the satisfaction of the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as planning authority.

Reason: To secure biodiversity enhancement, soften visual impacts and improve placemaking as well as ensuring that landscaping and long-term management are implemented to an approved standard in the interest of visual amenity, landscape quality and the successful establishment of compensatory planting in accordance with Policy 3: Biodiversity, Policy: 4: Natural places, Policy 6: Forestry, woodland and trees, Policy 14: Design, quality and place, and Policy 20: Blue and green infrastructure of NPF4 and Policy 4: Natural heritage and Policy 5: Landscape of the Cairngorms Local Development Plan 2021.

Informatives

1. The person undertaking the development is required to give the Planning Authority prior written notification of the date which it is intended to commence the development. Attached to this decision notice is a Notice of Initiation of Development for completion and submission. Submission of this information assists the Cairngorms National Park Authority Monitoring and Enforcement Officer in monitoring active work within the area to ensure compliance with the approved details and to identify and correct any potential problems, as they arise, rather than later when it may be more difficult and more costly to rectify. Failure to give notice would constitute a breach of planning control which may result in enforcement action being taken.

2. Following completion of the development, a notification of completion shall, as soon as practicable, be given to the Planning Authority. Attached to this decision notice is a Notice of Completion of Development for completion and submission. Submission of this form will assist the Cairngorms National Park Authority Monitoring and Enforcement Officer in making a final inspection and checking compliance with the approved drawings and conditions. If the development hereby approved is to be carried out in phases, then a notice of completion should be submitted at the completion of each phase.

3. Prior to any use of any self-catering or holiday unit, a Short-Term Let Licence must be in place to ensure that the unit meets the standards as required by the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 (Licensing of Short-Term Lets) Order 2022. Failure to secure the appropriate licence is an offence.

4. Swift nesting bricks should be installed at a minimum height of 5m, ideally just beneath the roofline/eves on north, east or west elevations (ideally north-facing). Where over-hanging roof is present the south-facing elevation is also suitable for integral bricks (but not external boxes).

5. External Bat roost boxes should be of 'woodcrete' or similar long-lasting material design. External bat boxes can be installed on buildings or on existing trees.

6. The Applicant is advised that Scottish Water has indicated that there is currently sufficient capacity within the Braemar Water Treatment Works to serve the development however capacity cannot be reserved and will be reassessed upon submission of a formal connection application. The Applicant should engage directly with Scottish Water regarding water and waste water connections and is encouraged to submit a Pre-Development Enquiry. Surface water should be managed separately from the public combined sewer system in accordance with Scottish Water's requirements.