



# Minutes of the Formal Board meeting

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

Hybrid

13 March 2026 at 12.30pm

## Present in person

Eleanor Mackintosh (Deputy Convener)

Peter Cosgrove

Paul Gibb

John Kirk

Lauren MacCallum

Fiona McLean

Duncan Miller

Jackie Brierton

Kenny Deans

Russell Jones

Bill Lobban

Ian McLaren

## Present online

Hannah Grist

Steve Micklewright

Ann Ross

Derek Ross

## In attendance

Grant Moir, Chief Executive Officer

David Cameron, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Director of Corporate Services

Andy Ford, Director of Nature and Climate Change

Gavin Miles, Director of Planning and Place

David Berry, Head of Planning and Chief Planning Officer

Dan Harris, Planning Manager (Forward Planning and Service Improvement)

Nasim Mehrabi, Planning Officer

Jeff Pyrah, Senior Planning Officer (Forward Planning)

Dot Harris, Planning Assistant

Scott Shanks, Ecological Advice Officer (Planning)

Heather Boswell, Senior Planning Officer



Katherine Donnachie, Planning Officer  
Katie Crerar, Planning Officer  
Lauren Neil, Graduate Planner  
Lacquarn Rose, Graduate Planner  
Onya Beaton, Student  
Karen Johnstone, Clerk to the Board  
Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board

## **Apologies**

Sandy Bremner (Convener)  
Michael Williamson  
Geva Blackett

## **Welcome and introduction**

1. Eleanor Mackintosh, the Deputy Board Convener, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted.

## **Matters arising not covered elsewhere**

2. There were not matters arising.

## **Declarations of interest**

3. There were no declarations of interest.

## **Local Development Plan Evidence Report (Paper 1)**

4. Dan Harris, Planning Manager (Forward Planning and Service Improvement) introduced the paper which seeks approval of the Evidence Report, as set out in Annex 1, for submission to Scottish Ministers for its “gatecheck” review by the Division for Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA).
5. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
  - a) Board Members praised staff for the level of hard work, time and effort that the team have put into the report and gathering the volume of evidence.



- b) Discussions were had around the housing requirements in Table 3 of Annex 1.13, noting the estimated existing housing need of 52 homes seems low. Senior Planning Officer explained these figures were produced by the Scottish Government (SG), not the Park Authority, noting that it was just one element of the evidence in calculating the housing land requirement of 889 new homes is needed over the 10 years of the Local Development Plan (LDP).
- c) A Board Member questioned if there should be mention of the possibility of implications on second homes, empty homes and vacant dwellings relating to triple council tax. Planning Manager explained this can be added for information, however this would not have any implications on the Proposed LDP as it is not a planning matter.
- d) A Board Member commented on the cultural heritage noting it is promising to see it is up to date in terms of the approach and recognising the impact of the sales of churches and the impact on the communities who want to buy them. It was also highlighted that it was positive to see the consultation evidence with traveling communities and their responses and how the Park Authority can address their desire to have their cultural heritage addressed.
- e) A Board Member questioned the Community Council engagement and how effective that has been as part of the LDP as it seems there was no contribution for a lot of schedules. Planning Manager explained it is hard for communities to engage with certain content unless it is relevant to them specifically, as they are often not experts in these areas. However, the team have attended Community Council meetings when requested as well as emails, face to face discussions, attending road shows and gatherings and interacting with people and community councils. It was noted that the best engagement came from Community Action Plan meetings, allowing the team to explain the process and how their input will influence the LDP. Planning Manger confirmed this was not an issue for the gatecheck, as Reporters are looking for engagement and the opportunities for engagement which have taken place, not the volume or quality of responses.
- f) A board member raised an issue around drought and where trees were being planted. Planning Manager explained LDP does not direct forestry, however drought and water scarcity is recognised in Schedule 19.
- g) Discussions were had around consultation fatigue. Planning Manager understood the difficulties of consultation fatigue and the team try to reduce this by combining with other consultations that are already ongoing, such as



Community Action Plans. CEO commented that the next phase is when local communities will be more interested in giving their feedback. The Park Authority have expressed concern to SG about the volume of consultations that the evidence report stage requires.

- h) A Board Member questioned if something is not specifically mentioned in the evidence report, does this mean it will not be included in the policy. Planning Manager explained this would depend, a topic would not be precluded if the issues have been taken into account, however, if a topic has not been taken into account and it has not been engaged upon, then it would not be able to be part of a policy. However, it was noted that implications are designed to include a degree of flexibility.
- i) Discussions were had around land use and scale of carbon markets and capital investments and how this can be shaped for community benefits. Planning Manager explained that unless it requires planning permission, it would not be included in the LDP, this could be included in the National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP). CEO noted that NPPP and Cairngorms 2030 (C2030) are working with estates and community benefits from land use.
- j) Discussions were had around transport strategy and prioritising sustainable transport, noting the paper mentions the Scottish Governments strategy to reduce the use of private cars. A Board Member mentioned that in rural areas there is not enough public transport to get from one village to another therefore a private car is essential. Planning Manager explained the LDP needs to be consistent with national legislation and policy and the Evidence Report must demonstrate that the Park Authority are taking this into account. It was however acknowledged that there are issues in rural communities and that most households rely on private motor vehicles. It was highlighted that the key implications for the Proposed Plan relate to the spatial strategy and how they influence where development is concentrated. This is already set out in in the NPPP, which identifies Aviemore, Grantown-on-Spey, Newtonmore, Ballater and Kingussie as Strategic Settlements.
- k) Discussions were had around living locally and 20-minute neighbourhoods and how information is gathered from those communities as a key theme for towns / villages is they want to be economically thriving to help improve their lives and their towns / villages. Planning Manger explained that Community Action Plans are developed and refreshed, the team analyse each one pulling out key actions, prepare the proposed plan highlighting these key areas for



properties, areas or actions for the spatial strategy. Further discussions will happen again with communities before final actions plans are put in place.

- l) Discussions were had around communities without Community Action Plans in areas such as Tomintoul and Glenlivet and how these communities are brought on board and how they can be helped. Planning Manager explained that the Park Authority has the information for areas that have a Community Action Plans in place. For areas that do not have these in place, the team will visit the community during the preparation of the Proposed Plan to allow them to contribute in a direct way. It was noted that community actions plans are not a statutory requirement and do not require a Community Council to create them. However, it is good for areas to have Community Action Plans in place where possible.
- m) A Board Member commented that there needs to be a holistic report when creating the Action Plan, cross cutting to highlight opportunities across different areas, especially in the economic development areas. Planning Manager agreed.

6. The Board noted the paper and agreed to the recommendations:

- a) Approve the Evidence Report for submission to Scottish Ministers via the Scottish Government Division of Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA) for its 'gatecheck' review.
- b) Delegate authority to the Head of Planning and Chief Planning Officer to respond to any request for further information or amendment as a result of the gatecheck process.

7. Action Points Arising: None.

## **AOCB**

8. None.

## **Date of Next Meeting**

9. The date of the next meeting is 27 March 2026 in person.

10. *The meeting concluded at 01.19pm*