

Deirdre Straw

From: Edward Workman [REDACTED]
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To: Planning
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Local Development Plan 2020

Categories: Kirsty

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F.A.O Cairngorms National Park Authority

Highlands Hospitality LTD (HHL) owns two large hotels in Braemar, The Fife Arms and The Invercauld Arms. Both hotels will be major visitor attractions and large employers within the Cairngorms National Park. We hope to make a significant and sustainable contribution to the National Park, cementing its position as an exceptional destination and tourism asset for Aberdeenshire, Scotland and the UK.

The Fife Arms will re-open later this year, after an extensive refurbishment, with the ambition to be recognised as the best hotel in Scotland. The hotel will have 46 rooms and suites, a restaurant, a pub and a small spa with sauna and treatment rooms. Almost 90 staff will be employed in the high season, providing exceptional guest services.

The Invercauld Arms is currently leased to a third party tour operator, but will be returned to HHL in due course for refurbishment. It is a large property, similar in character to The Fife Arms and with equal potential.

The sensitive refurbishment and marketing of these the two large hotels will enhance the tourist offering in Braemar and Upper Royal Deeside, helping promote this world class destination and attracting a large amount of additional visitors, bringing economic benefits to many local businesses and other tourist attractions.

The outstanding natural beauty of the National Park, alongside the authentically Scottish heritage, history and tradition of the area, are key to the success of our hospitality venture. In return the success of our hotels will provide opportunities for the population in the park to grow sustainably, through job creation.

We recognise the Local Development Plan 2020 as an opportunity for the National Park to support the wealth of initiatives currently taking shape in the village of Braemar. A mixture of private investment, volunteer effort and active not-for profit organisations undoubtedly makes Braemar one of the most exciting and buoyant populations in the Park. These endeavours need to be supported by a coherent and meaningful plan, which addresses the village's short term and long term requirements.

HOUSING

The current lack of affordable housing is already having a negative impact on business initiatives in the village and in the short to medium term this will certainly impact on our ability to attract and house the talented individuals we need to operate the hotels.

We strongly support the view of the Braemar Community Council, which clearly identifies the need for affordable housing in the village, and in particular the need for suitable housing for young people and small families, either to purchase or rent.

We also agree with the Council that the current settlement boundaries need to be reviewed to ensure that the village has room to grow, without impacting on the visitor experience. However, great care and attention must be given to protecting and enhancing the historic Highland character, setting and buildings of the village. Our hotels will attract a new audience to Braemar and Royal Deeside, and housing developments should be viewed as an opportunity by the Park to enhance the built environment through taking a sensitive and innovative approach to design, leading developers away from traditional outmoded housing models – there should be an emphasis on quality above all else.

ENHANCEMENT

The approach to Braemar on the A93 is a prelude that shapes the visitor experience, and the land either side of the road is of great value to the village and the National Park. We would like to encourage the Park Authority to work with local landowners, in particular Invercauld Estate and Mar Estate, to ensure that the land either side of all incoming roads to the village are not used for unsightly housing developments, but instead protected and enhanced by removing unnecessary deer fences, addressing street lighting, improving signage and pavements/cycle-ways and planting more trees. In particular, we oppose the development of non-preferred site AB022.

We also ask the Park Authority to work with Aberdeenshire Council to ensure that the car parking provision in the village is adequate for the expected increase in visitor numbers, attracted not only by the hotels, but also by the new Heritage centre in the Games park and Braemar Castle. The parking provision should encourage visitors to explore the village in its entirety, avoiding coach and car congestion in the centre of the village. Attention should be given to enhancing the visitor experience, by supporting local shops, through consideration for pedestrian movement, improving pavements/cycle-ways and signage.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

We expect our hotels to trigger a need for several businesses to support the influx of visitors and new residents. These could include laundry services, taxi services, maintenance services, florists, food and drinks suppliers and photography for private events. We would welcome the opportunity to converse with the Park Authority alongside other stakeholders to identify preferred development sites, that could support start up businesses.

We are fortunate and excited to have an opportunity to make the Cairngorms National Park a destination to live, work and visit, and we look forward to working with the Park Authority to further this ambition for current and future generations.

Yours Sincerely

Edward Workman

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HIGHLANDS HOSPITALITY
Edward Workman
Chief Executive Officer

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[The Fife Arms](#) [Roth Bar & Grill](#) [Manuela](#)
[Durslade Farmhouse](#) [The Bull Inn](#)

We are pleased to announce that [Durslade Farmhouse](#) has won Art Hotel of the Year 2016 at the prestigious LCD Awards