

NORTH EAST MOUNTAIN TRUST

A QUALITY
FUTURE FOR
MOUNTAINEERS
AND HILL-
WALKERS

Scottish Charity SCIO Number 008783

NEMT, c/o 20 Norfolk Road, Aberdeen AB10 6JR



Cairngorms National Park Authority

George Allan
7 Bothwell terrace
Pitmedden AB41 7PT

8/8/19

Engineering Works Cairngorm Mountain Planning Application 2019/0247/DET

I am writing on behalf of the North East Mountain Trust (NEMT), a Scottish Charity based in the Grampian area, which represents the interests of hill-goers and those who enjoy visiting wild land. NEMT membership, comprising twelve hillwalking and climbing clubs along with individual members, totals over 900 people.

NEMT objects to this application.

Firstly, in the 'Working Principles' adopted by the Park Authority, it is stated that any proposals for the ski area should be part of a masterplan. NEMT welcomed this statement as it should ensure that individual applications can be judged within the context of other proposals for the ski area. This masterplan has not yet been produced but NEMT understands that it will be put out for public consultation soon. As Cairngorm Mountain and HIE will be fully aware of the 'Working Principles', NEMT is surprised that this application has been made at this time. The Park must stick to the 'Working Principles' and postpone a decision until after the public consultation on the masterplan; to do otherwise is to make the 'Working Principles' redundant as a policy position. Also, given the environmental sensitivities, it is important that the Park is not rushed into a decision.

Secondly, the application form states that the work is required for the 'coming winter season'. This means that, if approved, heavy machinery will be used during late autumn when the ground will be very wet. This will lead to more damage to peat than is necessary with no time for the restored ground to recover before winter. This is totally unacceptable and contrary to the para 4.4 of the document lodged entitled 'Working with the Environment on Cairngorm' (produced by HIE in 2018) which states that work involving excavation is best carried out in the spring. The Ecological Survey Report states that it is inadvisable to carry out work on the site between March and August due to ground nesting birds. This suggests that the only time suitable for the work is August to September; too late for this year.

Thirdly, the application is woefully short of information as to how the work will be carried out and what steps will be put in place to ensure the highest environmental standards are met. While 'Working with the Environment on Cairngorm' lays out general principles, the current application must incorporate information specific to each of the small sites involved. This should include what machinery will be used, the lines vehicles will take to

each section and what will be put in place to protect these lines from damage to the vegetation. The working corridor in the boundary plan is far too wide and should be restricted to the absolute minimum.

NEMT thinks that this application should be rejected or a decision postponed. However, should approval be given sometime in the future, we think it is important to note that, in recent years, Cairngorm Mountain has proved to be an unsatisfactory environmental custodian, carrying out work to a poor standard and also without consent; with this in mind, it is essential that an ecological clerk of works is appointed and that the CNPA inspects the work as it progresses to ensure that any conditions are being adhered to.

George Allan

Trustee- North East Mountain Trust