

REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE ON 16 FEBRUARY 2010

SUBJECT: PRESSURED AREA STATUS FOR CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK

BY: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report advises the Committee of the outcome of analysis relating to an application for pressured area status for Cairngorms National Park.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to the development and implementation of the Council's Strategic Housing Plans.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Communities Committee:-

- (i) **notes the outcome of analysis of data relevant to an application for pressured area status for the Cairngorms National Park; and**
- (ii) **agrees that Officers submit an application to the Scottish Government for pressured area status for the Speyside and Cairngorms National Park areas of Moray.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 7 March 2006, the Council's application for Pressured Area Status was approved by the then Scottish Executive and covered the areas of Elgin, Lossiemouth and Forres Rural. The Community Services Committee was advised of this on 5 April 2006 (Paragraph 6 of Minute refers).
- 3.2 In April 2006 the then Scottish Executive published Pressured Area Designation supplementary guidance. This guidance states that "*in compiling an application for pressured area designation, a local authority would be expected to provide accurate and up to date data as part of the evidence*". The Guidance goes on to state that "*the ratio of the number of applicants on the waiting list to the number of lets has emerged as a fundamental consideration in the assessment process*". The guidance requires the Council to consider the ratio of waiting list applicants to lets as its core evidence to support an application. The guidance suggests the national average ratio to be somewhere between 5:1 and 6:1 (2006).
- 3.3 On 17 February 2009, the Council's application for Pressured Area Status for Forres was approved by the Scottish Government. The Communities

Committee was advised of this on 24 March 2009 (Paragraph 8 of Minute refers).

- 3.4 On 11 August 2009, the Communities Committee agreed that Officers should consider if a further application for pressured area status for the Cairngorms was justified (Paragraph 8 of the Minute refers).

4. APPLICATION FOR PRESSURED AREA STATUS

Data analysis

- 4.1 Following the Government's guidance the Council has considered the ratio of applicants to relets for all housing letting areas in Moray using 2006/7/8/9 data. The results show a ratio for Moray of 7:1 using 2008/9 data and 8:1 using 3 year average data (2006/7/8/9). The results for Tomintoul show a ratio of 8:1 using 2008/9 data and 10:1 using 3 year average data (2006/7/8/9), indicating greater pressure than the Moray average and the national average (see para 3.2), and sufficient pressure to justify an application for pressured area status.

- 4.2 In the course of preparing this data, Officers noted a similar position for other areas of Moray namely Aberlour, Archiestown, Craigellachie, Dufftown, Glenallachie, Glenlivet, Marypark and Knockando i.e. Speyside. The analysis shows that, taken together these areas show a ratio of 7:1 using 2008/9 data and 10:1 using 3 year average data.

- 4.3 Therefore Officers are confident that making an application for pressured area status for not only the Cairngorms but also the Speyside area of Moray would be justified.

Public consultation

- 4.4 The Housing Service has written to all its tenants in the Cairngorm and Speyside areas seeking their views on a pressured area status designation for their area. The survey achieved a 14% response rate. Of those responses 72% agreed with the Council's proposals.

Consultation with Partners

- 4.5 On 2 October 2009 the Housing Strategy Group confirmed its support for this application. Langstane Housing Association Ltd and Grampian Housing Association, both of which have stock in Speyside and/or the Cairngorms, are members of the Housing Strategy Group and were represented at that meeting. The Cairngorms National Park Authority are also members of the Housing Strategy Group and were represented at that meeting.

5. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

(a) **Corporate Development Plan/ Community Plan/ Service Improvement Plan**

Increasing the supply of affordable housing in Moray is a key priority in the Council's Single Outcome Agreement and the Local Housing Strategy.

(b) **Policy and Legal**

None

(c) **Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)**

The granting of Pressured Area Status will reduce the capital receipts receivable by the Council, but will increase the rental income to the HRA.

(d) **Consultations**

The Director of Community Services, the Chief Housing Officer, the Capital Programmes Manager, the Housing Programmes Manager and the Housing Strategy and Policy Manager have been consulted on this report and agree its contents.

6. **CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 **This report advises the Communities Committee of the outcome of analysis of data relevant to an application for pressured area status for Speyside and the Cairngorms National Park, and of the outcome of public consultation carried out in these areas. The report requests Committee's approval to proceed with an application to the Scottish Government for pressured area status for these areas.**

Author of Report: Fiona Geddes, Housing Strategy Officer
Background Papers: Held by author
Ref: FG/PAS Speyside