

## Broadband Project in Cairngorms gets a boost after decisive community meeting

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A community broadband project proposed to improve connectivity for Cairngorms National Park and neighbouring communities has received a boost after a positive meeting between the steering group and Community Broadband Scotland (CBS) on Friday.

The steering group, currently known as Cairngorm Community Broadband (CCB), met on Friday at the offices of the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) in Grantown-on-Spey to confirm the next steps of building a community broadband project in the area, which is hoped will connect around 900 premises to broadband services.

Chaired by the CNPA, the meeting saw representatives from across the area in attendance. During the productive meeting, one of the key decisions made by CCB was the type of legal entity that will be formed in order to take the community broadband project forward, a necessary step in order for the group to receive funding from CBS.

A small working group will now go forward and establish the legal entity before a State Aid public consultation is issued. This consultation notifies all interested parties that CBS may, in the future, be providing State Aid (public funding) for a broadband project in the Cairngorms area and invites comments from the marketplace.

Sarah Marshall, CBS adviser said: "Friday's meeting represented a real watershed moment for the steering group who are taking forward the Cairngorms project. CBS has worked closely with Cairngorms LEADER and CCB to identify which legal entity they will choose to take this project forward. CBS will continue to support the group through the next key stages of this exciting project which will be the issue of the State Aid public consultation document."

Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning and Rural Development for CNPA said: "This is a really important project for the Cairngorms National Park as it specifically targets those communities and businesses in the areas that are hardest to reach – and in a mountainous area we have quite a few of those! Good broadband connectivity is vitally important if we are to deliver our Economic Strategy and make the park an even better place to live and work.

"We have a lot of work still to do but Friday's meeting was a very positive move towards the establishment of community-led organisation that will be able to take the necessary next steps."

Brian Tolson, vice chair of Boat of Garten community council commented: "I'm delighted that all the work put in to date by a large number of people has resulted in this really important step forward. The creation of a company, which I hope individuals, local communities and businesses will be part of, is a tangible step forward in bringing high speed broadband to the National Park."

Further information and meeting notes on the Cairngorm Community Broadband project can be found on the [CNPA website](#).

If you would like more information on the project, contact Sarah Marshall, CBS adviser at [sarah.marshall@hient.co.uk](mailto:sarah.marshall@hient.co.uk) or phone on 07551 179 104.