

Jamie Greene, MSP
Deputy Convenor
Public Audit Committee

Friday 16th January 2026

Dear Mr Greene,

We would like to thank you and your fellow Committee members for your interest in the funicular, for hearing us on Wednesday and for making it very straightforward to contribute to the Committee's investigation. We found the openness and helpfulness of you and your fellow MSPs a refreshing and productive discussion.

It was good too to be put on the spot at the end by Joe Fitzpatrick about "the one thing" that would make a difference. We answered truthfully - we do not think there will be a sustainable solution to the problems at Cairngorm Mountain while HIE owns the land and business. We must also emphasise that there should be a firm obligation on HIE to retain financial liability for the funicular, as we explained earlier in the meeting. Perhaps we should have also emphasised that HIE should have a clear responsibility for all costs associated with the eventual removal of the funicular from the mountain.

We appreciate that the land ownership changes needed on the mountain will take some time to complete. Nevertheless, we are very keen that the PAC highlights the need for such changes in its conclusions to the funicular investigation. This would stimulate further political and public debate on the need for radical change on the mountain.

In the meantime, we want to emphasise that the PAC could make a difference in the immediate future by including in its recommendations something on the following lines:

- 1) that HIE produce a revised budget for the funicular, by updating the full business case for the recent repairs, as approved by the Scottish Government, to take account of the need for increased monitoring and maintenance etc) and by being far more transparent about the assumptions/data on which it is based;
- b) that HIE also produce business cases for each of the various diversification projects in the pipeline alongside a business case for two new chairlifts in the lower half of Coire Cas (between the Day Lodge and Shieling and to replace the Day Lodge Poma) so the costs and potential benefits can be compared as part of the development of a new masterplan.

Yours Sincerely,

Nick Kempe, Gordon Bulloch and Dave Morris

cc Colin Beattie, MSP; Joe FitzPatrick, MSP; Richard Leonard, MSP; Graham Simpson, MSP.