
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED:

Development of 6 Affordable Homes and associated Access Road, Car-Parking and Landscaping at Land South of Dellmhor, Rothiemurchus, Aviemore, Highland

REFERENCE: 2016/0434/DET

APPLICANT: Albyn Housing Society Ltd

DATE CALLED-IN: 1 December 2016

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to Conditions

CASE OFFICER: Gavin Miles, Head of Planning and Communities

Background and Review of Planning Obligations

1. The Planning Committee resolved to grant planning permission for this development proposal on 15 September 2017 subject to conditions and conclusion of a planning obligation covering education infrastructure. The papers from that meeting are available on the CNPA website at:

Planning Committee Report:	http://cairngorms.co.uk/resource/docs/boardpapers/15092017/Item6AADellmhorReport.pdf
Report & Appendices:	http://cairngorms.co.uk/meeting/planning-2017-09-15/
Planning Committee Minutes	http://cairngorms.co.uk/resource/docs/boardpapers/15092017/170915PCMinsv1.1.pdf

2. Since then, the applicant and Planning Service have been discussing planning obligations. It has become apparent that the development of the site will cost significantly more than the funding that Albyn Housing Society will receive in benchmark funding from Highland Council to provide affordable units.
3. CNPA officers have been given a detailed breakdown of the costs and are satisfied that they are accurate and reasonable. There is likely to be a shortfall of between £200k and £400k once all costs, including a planning obligation for education infrastructure are added. The planning obligation for education infrastructure from the development would start at more than £40k so is a significant part of the overall cost of the development.
4. Housing developments proposals within the Aviemore Primary School and Kingussie High School catchments are now routinely asked to provide contributions to allow those schools to grow. However, the scale of planning obligations for education infrastructure only became clear in mid-2017 following a review by Highland Council and the CNPA. Those costs were not available at the start of the planning process.
5. The development proposal is clearly not one that is commercially viable for affordable housing on basis of standard funding. Albyn Housing Society will have to make up the shortfall in funding if they are to develop the site. The more the development costs, the less likely it is that Albyn Housing Society, or any other affordable housing provider will be able to deliver affordable housing on this site.
6. Although the LDP policy on developer contributions will normally require such a contribution to infrastructure to be made, it is not an absolute requirement. Other factors, such as the merits of the development, scale of development and impacts and viability of the development can be taken into account.
7. The site provides an unusual opportunity to provide small affordable housing development in a location where open market housing is particularly desirable and expensive. The extra cost of the obligation reduces the likelihood of

delivery of this small affordable housing development. Each planning application must be considered in its own right and this proposal has demonstrable viability challenges to address.

8. The longer term alternatives to affordable housing on the site would be a more profitable open market housing development with significantly less affordable housing, a business or tourism related use without affordable housing, or no development at all. Officers consider that this application presents unique and exceptional circumstances that mean a case has been made to waive the education contribution in order to support the delivery of affordable housing on this site.
9. For those reasons and because the Planning Committee have already decided the principle and details of the development are acceptable, officers recommend that the Planning Committee now agree to approve the application without a planning obligation for education infrastructure. We consider that this is an exceptional case and such a decision will not stop the CNPA or Highland Council from securing appropriate and proportionate planning obligations from other development proposals in future.

RECOMMENDATION

That Members of the Committee support a recommendation to grant full planning permission for the Development of 6 affordable homes and associated access road, car-parking and landscaping at Land South Of Dellmhor, Rothiemurchus, Aviemore subject to the Conditions agreed on 15 September 2017.

Gavin Miles
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