

Ref 1 Name Kelsey Tainsh

Response

I am aware from speaking to some of my building colleagues that due to the severity of recent winters:

In the winter of 2009/10 they could not lay down any house/building foundations from November to April.

This puts pressure on builders to retain staff over non productive months.

The CNPA should possibly encourage planning applications to be submitted during winter months and early spring, and provide early planning permission, so that houses/buildings can be erected and made wind and water-tight prior to the arrival of winter weather, so that their employees can complete internal work during the winter months freezing weather conditions.

It might also be helpful if the CNPA were to try and ascertain approximately how many houses/buildings local builders need to build each year, to ensure that their business can survive, that they have an adequate work load to keep their employees in a job all year round, and that the CNPA Planning department take these stats into consideration, when viewing planning applications.

This might help to provide those employees involved with sustainable all year employment.

Ref 2 Name Baron Von Haldenwang

Response

Dear Madam: I am grateful that Karen Derrick gave me time for a brief statement during the meeting mentioned above. I thought it is important to crystallise the points made.

I have been an Airline Country Representative for Lufthansa over a period of some 40 years (1955-95). I have worked in developed, developing and under-developed countries and opened new flight routes to some of these countries. The infrastructure of these countries was a major concern. My wife and I have retired(?) to Blair Atholl in 1995. The ? after retired has a purpose: To keep our 'grey cells' active we have taken up guiding at Blair Castle in 1997. We do this in three languages, and we still have not given up. This has had two results: we meet tourists. - we linked with local friends and neighbours. We are also frequently in touch with Sarah Troughton and Andrew Gordon. In contrast to some of our local friends 'we have lost our blinkers' somewhere over one ocean; I trust you would understand the meaning.

Let me refer to the suggested housing plan:south/east of the Terrace:

Do note, please, that, although owning 'Fincastle', we are not against planning houses, neither are we 'bias'. Fincastle has at the slope 8 large trees which stand on a 5 m terrace and are 7 m high, we would not even see these buildings.

But, and contrary to the suggested philosophy:

Houses, once built, do not bring work, they accommodate people who have found work, live on a pension or want a holiday house.

Houses should no longer be built on arable land as we will be running short of food supply.

Instead one should induce a change of thought that renting accommodation for young people,

as done in central Europe, is indeed a 'green thought'.

There is no work at Blair Atholl, Lude and Blair Estate would have developed this long before your existence. All you would create are 'pendlers' from Blair to Pitlochry or even further.

However, on with the planned site, south/east of the terrace: Has the surveyor noted that there are no approach roads, in fact, there are no public roads, they are private roads, no pedestrian side walks?

these houses are directly next to the railways

these houses are confronted with the 'sweet' smell of Blair Atholl sewage system

these houses could be waterlocked, as the field has been

the sewage system can not afford any further input ??

- Let me refer to the quoted 'Touristim Importance'

My wife and I hear comments first hand, see introduction, guiding at Blair Castle:

A general Point:

One point I can take off your shoulder as you would not be able to change it: T H E W E A T H E R. - Most people will not try it again.

That means you would have to help to provide accomodationsystems where people are not asked to leave after breakfast (B&B)

That pricing would be brought to European standards (excluding Switzerland), but not as low as Greece and Turkey

A specific Point

Visitors to Blair Atholl receive a 'warm and interesting welcome'

the Quarry: Buildings which are blatantly anything else but the entrance to a 'Tourist Centre (your words).

Now do not, please, tell me that the quarry is outside your park and that you have no influence: even Murdo Fraser did not know this, how can a tourist know this. The quarry is an impact on arrival. If you cannot change it you should not have declared Blair Atholl as part of a 'P A R K '

Then comes a second 'Welcome' : Gulf Petrol Station. I do not want to miss these chaps, they are very efficient, always helpful, polite, people from far away come to have there cars served: But the station has outgrown its premises. Cars are now waiting to be served on the side roads,

A 'Sales Line' for cars has been arranged on the green track of the main road, and in difficult times large rescue vehicle to pick up our many stranded cars are parked and block the main entrance to BlairAtholl.

Do not try to come to Blair Atholl during a special event: Horse Trials: Cars needed from Killicrankie to Blair 3 hours

- In short: Blair Atholl, certainly Bridge of Tilt

Has no infrastructure. The wonderful headlines CNP -Ladies presented were indeed nothing but 'White Elephants'. Do start in small steps. Create an infrastructure.

I ended my statement in my own airline experience: It seems you want to built aeroplanes without having an airport, not even a runway; Andrew Gordon's Airstrip wont do!

Ref 3 Name Joan Dawber

Response

With regard to the above meeting, your CNPA staff were reluctant to discuss the reason the majority of people, if not all, were attending the meeting, namely the proposed plan to build houses in Bridge of Tilt.

It was well into the second half before they would even discuss the matter. We had to listen to them, but they were very reluctant to listen to why we were there. The meeting did not tell us how many houses you plan to build in Bridge of Tilt, or what kind. The land you propose is liable to flooding and would be next to a sewage plant. Have you studied the access to this site. The roads are very narrow in Bridge of Tilt. There is no room to change this. What is your vision of an access site.

Bridge of Tilt is a quiet and peaceful place to live. That's why we all live here. It cannot sustain more houses, particularly where you propose. I register my firm objection to houses being built on this proposed site in Bridge of Tilt as shown on your plan and I suggest you look elsewhere.

There is plenty of land suitable namely from the Atholl Arms Hotel towards the House of Bruar. The House of Bruar does not seem to have any problem with obtaining land for expansion, particularly for car parking. That area would have easy access to the A9 both north and south.

I object most strongly to what you propose.

Ref 4 Name Geoffrey Campbell

Response

Congratulations on your well illustrated booklet, I wish to comment as follows: Your proposal is a direct contradiction to item listed 1,2,4,6,7, and in my view a breach of planning guidelines for example you state that the long term future of the park must have an appreciation of what makes it special.

I therefore disagree with your proposal to build houses on the southeast site at Bridge of Tilt due to environmental reasons as the field is subject to flooding it is also too close to the Scottish Water Sewage area and a proper and safe access and egress is questionable there is also an Air take off and landing strip nearby.

At present it is an impressionable entrance to the CAIRNGORM NATIONAL PARK why destroy this by intending to build houses in this pleasant and inviting area.

With respect I would suggest that you look at developing the area to the north of Blair Atholl in the direction of Bruar which is better suited transportwise to join the new A9 either to the north or south.

My advice is develop that area which I extend to you from experience I gained as Chairman of Housing with Penicuik Town Council and I was their Representative on MIDLOTHIAN COUNTY COUNCIL before retiring to live in this scenic area.

Ref 5 Name Susan John

Response

Ballater Highland Games - Location

With new housing proposed near Monaltrie Park the open view up the fields and Dee valley will be much altered. A new location for the games should be considered. Two possible ideas would be either further down the valley or preferably at a field owned by Birkhall Estate (just past Invermuick) on the south bank of the River Dee (across from Ballater golf course). This field, with some landscaping and re-seeded grass, trees topped, has a stunning view of the village of

Ballater and is a natural arena.

Conservation of Victorian (or olde) Sash windows

Training of people to repair sash windows and grants towards work on original window fittings would benefit the Park area. Windows could be conserved perhaps by fitting in double glazing with in old frames or preferably repairs and fitting of good quality secondary glazing. Fewer and fewer original fittings exist. This would be of particular value to front windows in conservation areas. This craft work could provide good employment for local people and enhance tourism and optimism within communities. Full replacement conservation windows where poor quality replacements exist could be the second stage of such a conservation project.

Ref 6 Name Hamish Maxwell

Response

11.4 Blair Atholl - Paragraph 11.4.3

I wish to strongly object to the proposed site to the south east of the village for housing development. The land is too low lying causing drainage/sewerage problems, the visual impact on the approach from the south would be completely at odds with the existing housing, the approach roads to this site are wholly inappropriate as they are narrow and have no footways and blind entrances. This site would also have the effect of stretching the village into a ribbon development.

11.4 Blair Atholl - Paragraph 11.4.2 - I suggest that any housing development in Blair Atholl be to the north side of the main road, opposite the petrol station and Bridge of Tilt Hotel. This is far more suitable than the land to the south east as it has excellent mains services running along that road, easy entry/exit onto a straight road with no vision issues, and the opportunity to broaden the existing village community, rather than stretching it out. With foresight, this area could be made central to the community.

Ref 7 Name John Burrows

Response

I have received the document about Affordable Housing and would like to register my thoughts. If this is the vehicle, then my preference is that whilst The Authority Needs to have both a long term and short term plan, I feel that the important issue has to address the need for Homes for our local residents as a first priority. This can be addressed by utilisation of Brown Field sites or development opportunities in the village.

The plan to allow a developer to build a few "affordable homes" on a site for Weekend lets/holiday homes as presently being the discussed cannot be the only idea as the majority of people who would be able to afford the homes would not be local residents on part time incomes.

I appreciate any development requires funding and the ease of allowing a Developer to make that funding must be very tempting for the Authority in these difficult times. However your risk of short term gain could be something you rue in the longer term, the planning books are full of bad decisions, out of town shopping has killed town centres, just because the Money from the developers built a swimming pool or other Council amenity - outcome town centres that cannot contribute rates.

I am not a fool and appreciate we need to finance any project but I feel the temptation for an easy option will outweigh the longer consideration.

Ref 8 Name Rosemary Christie

Response

In response to various points raised at the above meeting, I would like to put on record my views on the following:-

1. The proposed area (coloured green on your map) for future housing at the Bridge of Tilt end of the village

I am opposed to this because:-

The infrastructure is totally inadequate.

Apart from the proximity of the sewage farm and railway, poor drainage/porosity of the land (as enumerated at the meeting), The Terrace, which is already the source of entry to the existing properties on that narrow road, and other roads leading off it to the other parts of the village is being used more and more by lorries, farm equipment, and the increasing business to the garage. This also has to serve as access for the provision of the big recovery lorries bringing vehicles to the back of the garage for repair.

The result is that this road is being constantly eroded and the side road leading off The Terrace to the back of the garage is full of dangerous potholes. (Attempts to fill these in from time to time by various residents and other sources are short lived.)

The Terrace, could best be described as a narrow lane, with no means of widening it.

Therefore, I would submit that this would be totally unsuitable for dealing with any further increase in traffic requiring access to the proposed site in question.

2. The entrance to the village (Blair Atholl - Bridge of Tilt) - Tourism

Any housing built on the proposed site would have a visually adverse effect to those entering from the direction of Pitlochry.

Visitors first impression is a village with no outcrop of modern, cheap looking dwellings, which would spoil their expectations of a village which surrounds such a famous castle.

I speak from experience when I lived in Strathpeffer (another village of outstanding history and beauty, and a main tourist attraction). Somehow, even though planning permission would be denied for a single dwelling which would blend into the village and landscape, planning permission was given to a certain landowner to build a number of modern houses at the approach to the village. The Tourist Board received numerous comments to the effect that it now looked like entering a shanty town.

PLEASE CONSIDER, DO YOU SIMILARLY WANT TO SPOIL OUR VILLAGE ? Any development should be sympathetic to the rest of the village. Especially as it is now in the National Park.

3. Alternative sites for development

I would support the suggestion (given at the meeting), of Lude Drive/Old Bridge of Tilt, on the road to Bruar, or any other suitable piece of land along that road. There are local and Citylink buses serving this route.

Ref 9 Name David Carrott

Response

Other Settlements - 11.15 Nethy Bridge - Paragraph 11.15.1

The centre of Nethy Bridge is unique. Unsympathetic development of the roads/ footpaths/ road signage etc to urban highways standards will destroy this environment. This has already been eroded by the Birchfield Court and adjacent development using standard highways treatment of concrete kerbs and straight lines of tarmac footpaths. A new approach needs to be taken to preserve this heritage. The present restrictions at the main bridge serve to calm the traffic without additional measures.

Other Settlements - 11.15 Nethy Bridge - Paragraph 11.15.5

I agree with the preferred opinion to add no further land for residential development. The size and scale of further housing development needs to be in keeping with the size and scale of the settlement. Steady organic infill development would be preferable to large scale 'estate' development. The housing waiting list is not a true guide to need eg. Recent successful development of Birchfield Court where there was no demand shown on the housing waiting list, yet all properties have been let/sold.

Ref 10 Name Gordon and Lin Muirhead

Response

With reference to the Cairngorm National Park Development Plan, and in particular the possibility of building houses on the south-east site at Bridge of Tilt. In our view the siting of houses here is wrong, it is in a low lying field which is prone to flooding, is next to the railway and next to the sewerage works. The village at this point has a natural boundary in the large bank which sweeps from the road all the way to the river, building on the flats there would be highly visible from the road and spoil the entrance to the village which is in effect the southern entrance to the National Park. Gaining access to this area would be through a residential part of the village with narrow lanes and primary school.

We both appreciate there is a need to expand the village to provide more housing, but are of the opinion there are sites far more suitable than the one mentioned. The area to the north of the main road running through Bridge of Tilt would be ideal especially the land to the west of the track to Kilmaveonaig Church. The infrastructure is all in place for this site, easy access to the main road, easy access for power, mains water right there, not sited in front of any existing houses and in an area which will not overpower the look of the village. We hope you will take on board our views which we believe are the views of many of the residents of Bridge of Tilt.

Ref 11 Name C Moffat

Response

Ballater has no other form of industry than the tourist trade. The winter months see a 50% drop in this industry. These figures may be verified by consulting the tourist office and the hoteliers (as my research discovered). At the height of the summer it is not uncommon for individuals to work at several jobs just to acquire a basic wage.

How can the unemployed afford to purchase affordable housing, for that is the reality facing them, ignore this and the social problems escalate.

The removal of arable ground for any reason will have far reaching consequences in a world that is chronically short of food. Finally Ballater/Deeside depends largely on the tourist trade.

Interfere with it at your peril.

Time to think out of the box.

Ref 12 Name Anne Moffat

Response

Where is the employment for these new home owners? Half the businesses in Ballater close or reduce staff in the winter months.

Will a larger school be built to cope with the influx of children?

Ref 13 Name Rodger Builders

Response

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Keppie Planning & Development have been instructed by Rodger Builders to submit representations on their behalf in respect of a site at Baddergorm, Bogroy, Carrbridge.

1.2 These representations combine both comments on the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan Main Issues Report (Section 5) and the Draft Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012 – 2017(Section 4).

1.3 In June 2010, Rodger Builders engaged in the Call-for-Sites process in advance of the Main Issues Report and we note in the Park Authority's analysis of sites, that the site at Baddengorm rates poorly in respect of landscape, settlement relationship and ecology, and highly on access to services and facilities, immediate site access and flood risk.

1.4 In analysing the site's landscape assessment comments, we consider that these do not accurately reflect the nature of either the proposal we are describing nor, the influence the site would exert on the village.

1.5 We assume that the landscape analysis of the 'dramatic pine woodland' refers to the plantation surrounding the site, but outwith the proposed development area. The trees within the site itself, are largely self seeded birch, although there are also some scrubby self seeded pine.

1.6 Indeed, the habitat survey appears to have described our site incorrectly as 22, not 25.

Notwithstanding this error, the description of the ecological value of the site, there is nothing in the description on pages 31 and 32 of the Enviro-Centre report that indicates there is any ecological potential on the site at threat by development. It is further strange that despite the large area of self seeded birch, the entire southern part of the site is described as a plantation. The balance being shrub heathland which is largely the open areas.

1.7 In summary, from the descriptions given in the two technical reports, supporting the Park Authority's reasons for not including this site for a plotted residential development and a subsequent settlement adjustment plus a tourism facility, there is no evidence that the development of this site would have an adverse impact on either landscape or ecology.

2.0 SITE

2.1 The area of land proposed for development is situated to the north west of Carrbridge, within an area know historically as Bogroy. The site is located on the edge of the Baddengorm Woods, and is proposed that a large proportion of this area be made available for recreational facilities as part of the proposals. It is agreed that the site is well linked to the town, per the Park Authority's comments when evaluating the site.

2.2 The plans below provide locational context for the site proposed for development via aerial photograph and OS map extracts. The site lies approximately 600 mts from the centre of Carrbridge (Post Office).

(Aerial Extract and OS Extract supplied)

2.3 The site is located directly adjacent to the existing Carrbridge settlement boundary and is

bounded to the north and west by the Baddengorm Woods, to the east by the Carrbridge Golf Club and to the south by the A938 with residential properties beyond

2.4 Vehicular access to the site is proposed from the A938, which links to the A9 trunk road. By way of public transport provision, the nearest bus stops to the site are located within the centre of Carrbridge, and services to Inverness and Aviemore are frequent. The nearest train station to the site is Carrbridge, which is located to the south of the site, across the River Dulnain.

2.5 From an examination of the SEPA Flood Map, the site area does not appear at risk from flooding by rivers or sea, a matter confirmed by the PA, acknowledging flood risk is not an issue. In terms of built heritage, no listed buildings or scheduled ancient monuments / noted archaeological sites exist on the site area, or in the immediate vicinity.

2.6 The plan below illustrates, a number of areas within and on the outskirts of Carrbridge are covered by the C/Env allocation, which recognises land which contributes to the setting of Carrbridge, and hence should be protected from development. It is very relevant to note that the site is not covered by the C/Env allocation by this emerging Plan.

2.7 This is surprising, noting the comments relating to the alleged significant impact that the development of this site will have on the setting of the village. (map supplied)

2.8 The green areas above are protected by Policy 4 Protected Species, and Policy 6 Landscape Setting.

2.9 The site lies on the outskirts of the Baddengorm Woods, however has not been developed as part of any commercial forestry operations. Tree cover throughout the site is sporadic, with large natural clearings evident. These clearings are well screened from Carrbridge, and the wider landscape area. (photos supplied)

2.10 From the illustrations above, any tourism development beyond the residential frontage will be hidden almost completely from Carrbridge.

2.11 In summary, we consider that this site will be entirely capable in landscape terms, of accommodating a tourism development of the nature prepared.

3.0 PROPOSAL

3.1 Our clients have, as yet, no finite proposal as that would ultimately depend on an allocation in the Local Development Plan, however a concept of how to develop this area has been considered.

3.2 We consider that the site provides the opportunity for the provision of a small-scale, sustainable, new tourism accommodation, and should be included as such through the forthcoming Local Development Plan process. It is the opinion of our clients that there exists a market for the type of accommodation proposed (i.e. chalets, log cabins and caravans) within walking distance of Carrbridge. The village is at present dominated by Bed and Breakfast and small hotel operations. Providing a different type of accommodation within the market place would encourage a different type of user to Carrbridge, and links to existing facilities such as the Landmark Centre would be encouraged.

3.3 Although no dedicated community consultation has been undertaken to date, it is proposed that such consultation would be undertaken should the National Park Authority express an interest in developing such proposals at the Main Issues Report / Proposed Plan stage.

3.4 Our clients are keen to ensure that any development which was to take place on the site would be as respectful to local setting as possible. Sustainable design and construction techniques would be employed, along with measures within the development to ensure that a significant proportion of energy could be produced from renewable sources.

3.5 In ensuring that the limited natural heritage value of the site could be retained and enhanced, it is expected that a more focused ecological study be undertaken in order to a) identify any areas where development would not be suitable and b) recommend strategies to enhance the attractiveness of the site and surrounding woodland as a sustainable habitat location.

3.6 As discussed above, ensuring the development will be well contained within the existing landscape setting of the site and surrounding environs is considered to be key in ensuring the deliverability of this site. A more focused landscape assessment of the site will inform any subsequent detailed masterplan strategy which would be developed for the site in the future.

3.7 Relationship to Carrbridge is also considered to be key given the location of the site directly adjacent to the existing settlement boundary. Our proposals to extend this existing boundary to cover a proportion of land directly adjacent to the A938 are considered appropriate in this regard. Not only will this extension ensure an appropriate transition from the community area, but will also consolidate existing residential development at this location, and compliment the ribbon development opposite the site. (plan supplied)

3.8 It should be noted that such proposals for a mixture of caravans and chalets are wholly indicative at present, and our clients are open to discussion in this regard in order to ensure that an appropriate development can be accommodated, both in terms of market demand and landscape fit.

3.9 In order to provide an appropriate transition from Carrbridge into the area proposed for tourism accommodation, it is proposed that the land parcel which directly adjoins the A938 be included within the Carrbridge settlement boundary (see plan at para. 2.11). Circa 6.no detached residential units could potentially be provided on this area, consolidating existing residential development on this side of the A938, and providing additional windfall housing within Carrbridge. A new public footpath would be provided adjacent to the A938, and it is proposed that a stone dyke also be introduced along this boundary, in keeping with those already established within the local area.

3.10 An example of the type of chalet accommodation proposed for the site can be found in the nearby Lochanhully Holiday Resort, over 2 Kms to the east of Carrbridge. This type of facility, can be set within the existing landscape, as a Lochanhully. In a similar way, a modern development would be advanced on this site, ensuring development areas are focused on those natural clearings (photographs supplied of Lochanhully Holiday Resort and Natural Clearance Within Baddengorm)

3.11 It is proposed that the immediate area surrounding the site (i.e. that area of Baddengorm Woods which is in the control of our clients) would be utilised by the proposals, providing recreational activities which are easily accessible from the accommodation areas. This may include path networks, bike tracks, pony trekking facilities etc.

3.12 From an assessment of the Adopted Plan sites which are largely the same as those proposed in the Main Issues Report, except for the deletion of the ED1 site at Landmark Visitor Centre, our client's site at Baddengorm compares favourably. This is true, not only in distance from the centre of Carrbridge and facilities, but also the loss of commercial forestry required to develop the larger housing sites. The principle of development on forestry and encouraging development away from the centre of the village is thereby established by these allocations. (map supplied)

3.13 In summary, a mixed tourism and residential development of the nature described above can be attractively and unobtrusively, located within a woodland setting at this locus, in full conformity with both the Adopted Local Plan and the emerging planning policies which we will review in more detail in sections 4 and 5. It is also consistent with the approach taken to date as the zoned allocations.

4.0 DRAFT CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK PLAN 2012 – 2017 COMMENTS

5.0 CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN MAIN ISSUES REPORT

5.1 We have concentrated our response on only the issues that directly affect the type of uses we propose at the settlement of Carrbridge.

5.2 Special Qualities of the Park - Question 1

We agree with the preferred option of protecting areas with defined special qualities and designated sites.

5.3 Affordable Housing - Question 4

We partly agree with the preferred option to support the needs of the communities, provided there is sufficient flexibility to encourage a range of product to be established, including affordable self-build for example.

5.4 Spatial Strategy – Question 5

We agree with the generality of the spatial strategy which focuses development in settlements such as Carrbridge.

5.5 Carrbridge – Question 16

We generally agree that the strategic sites identified in the Adopted Local Plan and essentially confirmed in the Main Issues Report should remain the major focus for residential and employment uses.

We do not agree that these sites represent the entire option and that a limited allowance should be made for some additional houses along the A938, opposite the existing ribbon development from the golf course to Lilac Cottage.

The consolidation of Carrbridge would be achieved and a minor boundary adjustment required, as indicated in sections 2 and 3.

In addition, there is a need for additional tourism accommodation and the site at Baddengorm Woods should be allocated for additional new tourism accommodation.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 We have considered the terms of both the Draft National Park Plan 2012 – 17 and the Main Issues Report, and have made detailed comments, largely in support of the general principles outlined.

6.2 In substance, the provision of tourism accommodation and a limited number of housing plots adjoining Carrbridge meet with the principles set out in the Draft National Park Plan and indeed, the existing National Park Plan.

6.3 In detail, referring to the Main Issues Report, we consider that the site at Baddengorm Carrbridge should be supported in the Local Development Plan as a site for tourism accommodation and house plots for the following reasons:-

- The site is close to the village, but not within it, separating tourism accommodation from residential areas.
- The site is close to shops, facilities and recreational/tourism attractions.
- The site is not within an ENV designation which comprise sites that are protected from development due to their importance re. setting of Carrbridge.
- There is a need for additional new tourism facilities within the Park area per the aims of the Draft 2012-17 Plan.
- There is a need to retain young people by providing jobs locally.
- There is a need for serviced plots for self-build for local people.
- The site's development will not have an adverse effect on the setting of Carrbridge as development will be set within the significant gaps in the woodland.
- Much of the woodland is self seeded birch.
- The setting of the village is largely formed by the plantation, which will be unaffected by this proposal.
- The serviced plots will, in part pump prime the infrastructure required to create the tourism accommodation sites.
- There are no ecological resources of any designated protection on the site.

6.4 In conclusion we recommend that this proposal to extend the village along the A938 from the house adjacent to the golf course to Lilac Cottage to incorporate a number of house plots and the entrance to the tourism accommodation. In addition, the remaining land as shown on the

indicative masterplan be zoned for tourism accommodation.

Ref 14 Name William Grant

Response

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Keppie Planning & Development have been instructed by Mr William Grant (our client) to submit representations on his behalf in respect of site at Drumuillie Croft, No 9, Drumuillie.

1.2 These representations combine both comments on the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan Main Issues Report (Section 4) and the Draft Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012 – 2017(Section 3).

1.3 In June 2010, our client, through ARM Architects, engaged in the Call-for-Sites process in advance of the Main Issues Report and we note in the Park Authority's analysis of sites, that the entire croft lot 9 (site 002 8.79 ha) rates poor in respect of landscape, access to services and facilities, and high on flood risk, the other categories measured being amber.

1.4 In analysing the site's landscape assessment comments, we confirm that these views have led to the client to reflect on the appropriate scale and extent of development being promoted.

1.5 In order to avoid the key issues identified in respect of landscape and the landscape setting of the Hamlet, we consider that a significantly reduced level of development restricted to individual plots alongside the road and adjacent to the existing houses, would be more appropriate.

1.6 Our client has therefore taken notice of the Council's concerns and will be promoting a more modest rounding-off infill within the confines of the grain of the Hamlet.

2.0 SITE / PROPOSAL

2.1 The area of land proposed for development comprises 2 parcels of ground, as shown in the plan below. (Site plan supplied)

2.2 Site A - This area is proposed for a single plot. It lies between Pilmuir and Lychum Cottage and it is our client's intention to submit a detailed planning application in due course for that plot as it complies, in our view, with the Adopted National Park Local Plan 2010, Policy 21 (Housing Development in Rural Groups). (photo supplied)

2.3 This site is a logical rounding-off of the Hamlet and the plot is large enough to allow the construction of a house which would retain the character of the settlement, subject to detailed design issues.

2.4 In that context, Keppie Planning & Development are pursuing pre-application procedures (14/11/11) with the Park Authority in relation to the suitability of this site. We consider that its development would not only consolidate the grouping, which is more than three occupied houses, and not adversely affect the landscape setting of the Hamlet.

2.5 Site B - This area lies between Burnside and Birch Cottage and would be proposed as a site for 3 or 4 individual plots. (photo supplied)

2.6 The development of the site would consolidate the housing grouping and round-off of the Hamlet in an appropriate manner.

2.7 Infrastructure Details

The site has a main water supply connection and electricity connection, foul and surface water drainage will be by septic tank. The site has excellent access to the public road and local public transport facilities are available within a 10 minute walking distance.

2.8 Community and social facilities are available in Boat of Garten which is a short distance from Drumuillie.

2.9 In summary, these 2 areas as described would consolidate the existing groupings forming the Hamlet of Drumuillie in a suitable appropriate manner.

3.0 DRAFT CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK PLAN 2012 – 2017 COMMENTS

4.0 CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN MAIN ISSUES REPORT

4.1 We have concentrated our response only on the issues that directly affect the use we propose at Drumuillie.

4.2 Special Qualities of the Park - Question 1

We agree with the preferred option of protecting areas with defined special qualities and designated sites.

4.3 Spatial Guidance (Option 3) – Question 2

We agree that clear guidance on directing development away from sensitive locations should be the preferred approach. Our client's plotted sites of Drumuillie should qualify as a preferred location due to its non-sensitivity from an environmental perspective. All care will be taken to comply with sustainable Design Guidelines and as indicated, the site can be easily serviced.

4.4 Affordable Housing - Question 4

We partly agree with the preferred option to support the needs of the communities, provided there is sufficient flexibility to encourage a range of product to be established, including affordable self-build for example.

4.5 Spatial Strategy – Question 5

We agree with the generality of the spatial strategy which focuses development in settlements such as Boat of Garten, near Drumuillie. Moreover, we support the suggested action to "Clarify what is anticipated in rural communities outwith identified settlements".

4.6 In this respect, this issue is a key policy response we seek through this consultation.

Whilst we consider Site A complies with current Adopted Local Plan Policy 21, a more flexible approach is required to enable Site B and, in this context, we support this review and recognise the potential for additional "ad hoc development outside the settlement hierarchy to meet local need". This presumably would operate on a site-by-site basis, and be determined on the specific circumstances pertaining to the relationship between sites and existing groupings/hamlets, such as Drumuillie.

4.7 We further consider in this context, that our client's sites are deliverable/effective in terms of national planning policy and achievable for all practical purposes.

4.8 We therefore recommend that existing Policy 21 be altered or replaced to create sufficient flexibility to achieve the aims of Issue 5, Option 1, as set out in the "implications" bullet points which we have addressed

4.9 Issue 6 Support for Rural Areas – Question 25

We agree with the preferred option (Option 3) and the need to allow different approaches in different communities. We are confident that our client's sites A and B will meet the prospective criteria for a site's sustainability within the context of the landscape, and the dispersed character of the grouping/hamlet which also builds on historic growth patterns.

4.10 We further consider that sites A and B cannot be described as development in open countryside and will provide an entirely sustainable and suitable consolidation in line with the principles set out in both Issue 6 and Issue 5.

4.11 In Summary

As we have confirmed in this submission, we have reviewed the extent of development being sought through the LDP and would request that our client's revised sites A and B be included as preferred sites in the forthcoming Local Plan, for the reasons set out in this report.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 We have considered the terms of both the Draft National Park Plan 2012 – 17 and the Main Issues Report, and have made detailed comments, largely in support of the general principles outlined.

5.2 In substance, the provision of a limited number of housing plots within the rural hamlet of Drumuillie meet with the principles set out in the Draft National Park Plan and indeed, the existing National Park Plan.

5.3 In detail, referring to the Main Issues Report, we consider that the sites at Drumuillie should be supported in the Local Development Plan for house plots for the following reasons:-

- Our client has responded to the Park Authority's views on the submitted Call-for-Sites and significantly reduced the area to be considered.
- The sites form a natural and sustainable consolidating/rounding-off at Drumuillie.
- Site A fully conforms with Adopted Local Plan Policy 21.
- Both sites are effective in terms of National Planning Policy.
- It is considered that there are no landscape, ecological or setting issues put at risk by building on these two sites.

5.4 We would request that sites A and B, as described in this report, be considered suitable as plotted residential sites and that flexibility be included in a revised rural housing policy to replace Policy 21 along the lines outlined in Issues 5 and 6 of the Main Issues Report, which we support as creating the opportunity for a more flexible approach to rural housing.

Ref 15 Name Robin & Freda Gibson

Response

We approve of all your responses to questions 4,12 (especially last para), 15,25,26. Congratulations to the council for an excellent, clear & well thought out response to a complex C N P local development plan !

COPY OF DRAFT COMMUNITY COUNCIL RESPONSE

Blair Atholl & Struan Community Council
Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan
Main Issues Report- Consultation Sept-Dec 2011
Draft Community Council Response Nov 2011

This is a draft of the Community Council's to selected questions in the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan Main Issues Report. We have focussed on these questions as we feel they are of most direct relevance to the local community and are likely to cover the more controversial issues. These are:

ISSUE 4-Affordable Housing: How and where can we meet the housing need in our communities - open market, affordable, local needs?

ISSUE 5: Spatial Strategy- Blair Atholl/: What are the options for growth in Blair Atholl?

ISSUE 5: Spatial Strategy- Bruar and Pitagowan: What are the options for growth in Bruar and Pitagowan?

ISSUE 6: Support for our Rural Areas: How do we plan for development that supports our rural areas -follow the existing patterns of development or take a different approach?

ISSUE 7: Connectivity and Communications: How can we help people move around the Park - local access, tourists, people travelling through the Park?

Note that this response is intended to be representative of the whole community of Blair Atholl and Struan, and may not represent the views of individual Community Councillors or of particular sections of the community.

(Extract from the Main Issues Report - Issue 4- Affordable Housing included - Question 4)

Community Council Response to Question 4

We generally support the preferred option. However, we note that, in Blair Atholl, the main sites identified for housing in the current Local Plan are unsuitable in their current condition due to flooding risk. As outlined in our response to Question 12, we do not believe the new site identified in the Blair Atholl spatial

strategy is appropriate for housing and we would welcome discussion on alternative sites. We believe that it is important to identify sufficient land in the Blair Atholl area to allow for expected housing needs for several years.

We welcome the proposal to include a benchmark of 25% for the proportion of affordable housing in new developments. The affordable element need not be included on the same site as the other housing, but should be within the same settlement.

(Extract from the Main Issues Report - ISSUE 5: Spatial Strategy -Blair Atholl - Question 12 supplied)

Community Council Response to Question 12

We disagree with the proposal to include the site to the south-east of the village to provide opportunities for housing. To develop housing in this field would fundamentally alter the entrance to the village from the south. This is given added importance as Blair Atholl is the first community sign posted after the southern entrance to the Cairngorms National Park on the A9, and will be the first impression many visitors have of the Park. We also have concerns about the suitability of the field for housing. The access to the site is unsuitable for any significant increase in traffic as the approach roads are both narrow with no pavements and blind entrances. There is little scope for widening either road to modern standards. Although the part of the field identified is outwith SEPA's 200 year flood zone, it does not drain well. It is also close to the local sewage works.

We recognise that the sites shown in the current Local Plan are unsuitable for housing because of the flood risk. However, we would suggest that, before ruling them out altogether, an assessment is made of the likely cost and effects of flood protection measures so that one or both of these sites could become suitable for development.

As an alternative to the site proposed and the current sites, we would suggest that Site 019c stretching down the Glen Tilt Road from Old Bridge of Tilt to Bridge of Tilt should be considered. This site would appear to be better drained and is just as close to most village facilities as the site to the south-east. It would require a pavement and perhaps widening of the Glen Tilt road, but there appears to be adequate land available for this.

We welcome the planned visit by the Affordable Housing Officer to view the proposed sites and to discuss the potential need for affordable housing and where it might be built.

The Main Issues Report shows no requirement for housing land in Blair Atholl beyond that required for the 14 affordable homes identified on Perth & Kinross Council's current waiting list.

We believe that there is a requirement to identify suitable land in the village for further development over time, both for open

market housing and for further affordable housing in the future. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss further the possibility of suitable sites for this with the appropriate officers of the Cairngorms National Park Authority and Perth & Kinross Council.

We agree with the proposal to use the land identified in the current Local Plan to provide opportunities for economic growth.

(Extract from the Main Issues Report - ISSUE 5: Spatial Strategy - Bruar and Pitagowan Question 15 supplied)

Community Council Response to Question 15

The land identified in the current plan and shown shaded on the map in the Main Issues Report is currently completed occupied by House of Bruar for the purpose of car parking. There therefore seems to be little opportunity to use this land for economic growth unless alternative land is identified for car parking. As it is an "out-of-town" location, the vast majority of visitors to House of Bruar are travelling by car. At times, the car parks are very busy and it is difficult to see how parking provision can be reduced without affecting the number of customers.

We suggest that either further land should be identified for parking so that the existing car park can be developed for other uses, or that an alternative site should be identified for economic growth. As the main source of economic growth is likely to be House of Bruar, it would make sense to develop the commercial activity adjacent to the existing buildings.

(Extract from the Main Issues Report - ISSUE 6: Support for our Rural Areas Question 25 supplied)

Community Council Response to Question 25

We generally support the preferred approach. Our only reservation is the inclusion of the phrase "which matches historic growth patterns". While this is an admirable general principle for most developments, the

be appropriate for the area. As an example from our own area/ some 20 years ago/ an approach that matched historic growth patterns might well have rejected House of Bruar/ even in its much smaller early days/ yet it is now a major contributor to the economy of the area.

(Extract from the Main Issues Report ISSUE 7: Connectivity and Communications - Question 26 Supplied)

Community Council Response to Question 26

In general we agree with the preferred approach. However, we believe that there is an important role to play in ensuring that connections into and out of the National Park are developed in a way that ensures that visitors can reach the National Park by appropriate transport links and also that residents of the National Park can easily and conveniently reach local and regional services where these are based outside the National Park boundaries. This will include encouraging service providers and transport operators cooperate to ensure that all sections of the community, and particularly those without ready access to cars, can be fully served.

Ref 16 Name Mountaineering Council Of Scotland

Response

The Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCofS) is the representative body for hill walkers, climbers and ski tourers, and is the only national representative body of the sport of mountaineering in Scotland. We have 11,000 members, and are recognised by sportscotland as representing the interests of all mountaineers. The National Park is of huge importance to mountaineers from beyond its borders, as well as residents. The MCofS interest in the Local Development Plan lies primarily in issues of public access and conservation. The latter includes both landscape and biodiversity in mountaineering areas.

We support the four aims for National Parks as set out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. We welcome the opportunity to work in partnership with the Cairngorm National Park Authority to achieve these aims within the Park.

Our response takes into account our strategic principles, which state that the upland landscape is an asset to which everyone has the right of responsible access, and which has a scenic, cultural, and economic value to the Scottish people that is worth significantly more than purely its economic value. It should however be recognized that the landscape of the upland areas of the Park is a major feature giving the Park its character and coherent identity.

ISSUE 1 – SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE PARK (Section 5)

In response to Question 1, the MCofS agrees with the preferred option, Option 2, on the basis that it provides greater clarity for prospective developers and communities prior to any testing by a planning application. It will also be clearer where certain special qualities have a stronger representation. This is particularly important for the consideration of wildness for which there is no site designation, and for which there was no spatially indicative map previously available. The spatial mapping also improves the clarity of how national policy on wildness (Scottish Planning Policy in section 128 and National Planning Framework 2 in section 99) applies.

ISSUE 2 – RESOURCES (Section 6)

In response to Question 2, the MCofS agrees with the preferred option 3 for the same reasons as above; spatial mapping provides greater clarity of the location of important features.

ISSUE 5 – SPATIAL STRATEGY (Section 9)

The MCofS supports the organic growth of existing settlements rather than new villages/towns. We do not consider An Camas Mor as a necessary or desirable approach to addressing the housing need in the Park, and hence should be removed from the settlement hierarchy. In answer to Question 5, the MCofS therefore proposes that an alternative be found to An Camas Mor and that the necessary housing allocation be found through developing the existing settlements.

An Camas Mòr (Section 10.3)

As stated already, the MCofS considers An Camas Mor will have a negative impact on the landscape of the area. In response to Question 6, the MCofS does not agree with the preferred option.

SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE (Section 15)

The MCofS welcomes the commitment to formally adopt guidance on wildness, and consider this necessary to make effective use of the excellent work done in preparing the guidance. In response to Question 28, the MCofS considers that the general direction of the wildness SPG is the correct basis on which to build. We do however consider that the mapping would offer increased clarity and guidance if the working map was in zones, as it was presented in the draft version.

Ref 17 Name William Houston

Response

On Issue No 4 - my preference is Option 2 because:

1. Market demand in Ballater is NOT for open market housing but affordable homes.
2. Little or no effort has been made by CNPA to examine feasible alternatives. The Draft Plan studiously ignores existing development possibilities for affordable units within the village. An example is the Old School - a building rotting away because, one suspects a Local Authority department has some vague idea it would be used for some obscure 'educational purpose' in the undefined future.

3. Instead of fostering private developers who concentrate on large-scale open market housing on virgin plots and pandering to landowners to raise cash, use local builders to prepare plans for construction and conversion of affordable homes at existing sites and properties.
4. The draft plan does not explain why Ballater is 'strategic' adequately enough. A much more strategic location is Dinnet which is the first settlement on entering the Park from the east. If the CNPA had any strategic development plans Dinnet is where it should look - not Ballater.

Ref 18 Name Scottish Wildlife Trust

Response

Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Main Issues Report (MIR) to inform the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan.

SWT believe that inappropriately located and badly designed developments have significant, detrimental impacts on Scotland's biodiversity and on people's quality of life. The planning system should act as a guardian for biodiversity and actively support and promote its conservation, enhancement, restoration and expansion. In addition, the planning system should be a strategic and spatially-based process which identifies and protects biodiversity at multiple scales, encompassing; species, habitats, wildlife networks (e.g. green ecological networks) and regional-scale ecosystems.

SPECIFIC POINTS:

Issue 5 Spatial Strategy- Boat of Garten

The map on page 65 identifies four sites (brown blocks lettered H) that may be suitable for future housing

development. We believe the 'L' shaped site in the Boat of Garten woods is by far the least favourable of the four suggested sites and should be considered only as a last resort.

Capercaillie are regularly seen within these woods, which is to be expected given the proximity to Abernethy Special Protection Area which holds at least 2 % of the breeding population of Great Britain. Development in the Boat of Garten Woods would trigger an appropriate assessment as loss of habitat and increased disturbance (humans and their pets) would impact on the resident capercaillie population. Indeed rut of the proposed development sites in Boat of Garten would have to be considered in terms of increased use/disturbance within the Abernethy Forest SPA. We believe development within the Boat of Garten Woods would be contrary to: (i) the first aim of the Scottish National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 which is:

To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area

and (ii) the Nature Conservation (Scotland) 2004 Act which places a duty on public bodies to further the

conservation of biodiversity. Part 1 Section 1 states:

(1) It is the duty of every public body and office-holder, in exercising any functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions.

Issue 5 - An Camas Mor

Whilst we recognise that An Camas Mar has had a well executed masterplan that aims to deliver a 'sustainable community' we do believe that the development is in the wrong location given the potential effects on the qualifying features of the River Spey Special Area of Conservation, significant loss of heathland habitat that will occur and the impacts on the species present including Scottish wildcat and black grouse. Agreeing to the development is also contrary to the first aim of the Scottish National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 and the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 (see above).

That said, if the development does go ahead it is essential that there is a sustainable transport connection to Aviemore town centre across the river. We believe the construction of a 'green' bridge should be a requirement of the development proposal otherwise it is highly likely that members of the new community will make the trip into Aviemore by car which would be at odds with the 'sustainable' objectives of the proposed development.

We would like to emphasise the four aims of national parks as set out in the National Parks (Scotland)

Act 2000 which are:

- to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage;
- to promote the sustainable use of the natural resources of the area;
- to promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public; and
- to promote sustainable social and economic development of the communities of the area

Where there is a conflict between the conservation aim (first aim) and any of the others aims the first aim takes precedence.

This should set the context of the Local Development Plan. However, Section 1.5 and 1.6 of the MIR appear to contradict each other and indeed the Act.

Whilst section 1.6 states inter alia: The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 recognises in particular that there may be conflicts between conserving and enhancing the natural and cultural heritage and the other three aims. Where it appears to the National Park Authority that there is such a conflict, the Act requires that greater weight is given to conserving and enhancing the natural and cultural heritage.

Section 1.5 states: These aims are to be achieved collectively, and in a co-ordinated way. It is their collective delivery, and the management challenges this brings, that lies at the heart of what it means to be a National Park. It is not enough to take each aim in turn, or to trade them off in an attempt to balance each other. What is required in National Parks is an approach that delivers for all four aims together, and that means doing things differently.

Whilst we agree that a multifunctional approach to land use is required and indeed accords with the Scottish Government's Land Use Strategy this should not override the first aim of the Act which is to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage. Section 1.5 should be removed or revised to reflect the Act.

Furthermore delivering the aims of the of the Park (3.1) should state that the driving force in the management and use of land in the Cairngorms National Park is delivery of multiple benefits which at the same time conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage.

Ref 19 Name William Yuile

Response

Question 4:

I do not agree with the preferred option for Ballater. I support a variation of Option 2, as described below, to increase the supply of affordable housing.

Question 8:

I do not agree with the preferred option for Ballater. I describe below another option that will

provide the right amount of growth in Ballater.

The alternative scheme I would support is to focus on affordable housing only through identifying and allocation brownfield and infill locations for building small numbers of affordable homes inside the existing village boundaries and identifying existing properties suitable for conversion. Abandon entirely the development of BL/H1, which is both unnecessary and likely to lead to the destruction of the established village ethos and culture.

This kind of approach will:

- more naturally integrate homes into the community
- put affordable homes where those who need them want them
- avoid the vagaries of open market development
- avoid developer 'change of mind'
- minimise the cost of affordable homes in Ballater
- place affordable homes closer to village services/amenities
- avoid further holiday/second homes being bought and left substantially vacant
- enable the pace of development of affordable homes to meet the real need, once this is understood
- protect the integrity of Ballater's setting and community, both of which are vital to its economic survival
- help improve existing buildings in the older part of the village
- avoid the issues of the flood plain
- avoid the destruction of flora and fauna supported by the area BL/H1

Ref 20 Name George Knox

Response

As a landowner with around 50 acres in Nethy Bridge, adjacent to Lynstock Crescent and Lurg Road, we have taken on board comments made at the consultation meeting held at the Community Hall, Boat of Garten on the 25/10/2011. We are very interested in discussing 100% affordable housing which will benefit the Village

We are open to discussion to identify suitable location/locations and I met with Mr Di Alexander of CNPA on the 24/11/2011 and handed over a plan showing the land under our ownership. I can confirm having built the 10 houses on Lurg Road and Lynstock Park all Sewers, Water and Electricity are in hand.

We also attended the Nethy Bridge community Council meeting on the 03/11/0211 this can be seen from the minutes. Our proposal was discussed and Ms K Derrik (VABS) was very interested to take matters forward. I look forward to receiving your comments in due course. (map of land in ownership supplied)

Ref 21 Name Roger Tozer

Response

Issue 1 – Special Qualities of the Park

Paragraph 5.6 - Agreed. Any development will increase the man-made footprint and so should be kept to an absolute minimum. In essence, development and protection/enhancement of the "special qualities" will almost always be in conflict.

Paragraph 5.11 - Yes.

Issue 2 – Resources/Reducing our Consumption - Paragraph 6.11 - Yes.

Issue 3 – Support for our Communities

Paragraph 7.5 - To protect the "special qualities" only businesses that service recreation (in its widest sense) and the needs of the community should be encouraged.

Paragraph 7.9 - Yes.

Issue 4 – Housing/Affordable Housing - Paragraph 8.15 - Prefer option 3: But increase percentage of affordable housing to 25-50%, so that new build provides houses for those on low incomes and prevents excessive creation of unaffordable homes (many of which will be bought as second/holiday homes), that erode the "special qualities".

Issue 5 – Spatial Strategy - Paragraph 9.12 - Yes.

Main Settlements

An Camas Mor - Paragraph 10.3.2 - By what means do you create a "demographically balanced resident population"? Is there a legal process by which this can be achieved? If not, this statement should be modified.

An Camas Mor - Paragraph 10.3.6 - No. A development of this scale is inappropriate in a National Park. In any case, during a large part of the 20 year development period, An Camas Mor would be "parasitic" on services in Aviemore. Demands for affordable housing can be met by upping the proportion in other developments. If demand includes housing for non productive incomers, then this must eventually be restricted or the "special qualities" will cease to exist.

Aviemore - Paragraph 10.4.5 - Yes.

Ballater - Paragraph 10.5.5 - Yes.

Grantown-on-Spey - Paragraph 10.6.3 - Yes.

Kingussie - Paragraph 10.7.2 - Provision of some 300 houses will not protect the "physical appearance and atmosphere of the village", especially if many are second/holiday homes.

Kingussie - Paragraph 10.7.5 - No. Allow growth that accords with the community's vision.

Newtonmore - Paragraph 10.8.5 - No. Prefer option 2.

Other Settlements

Blair Atholl - Paragraph 11.4.4 - Yes.

Boat of Garten - Paragraph 11.5.3 - Yes.

Braemar - Paragraph 11.6.6 - Yes.

Bruar and Pitgowan - Paragraph 11.7.3 - Yes.

Carr-Bridge - Paragraph 11.8.4 - Yes.

Cromdale - Paragraph 11.9.5 - Yes.

Dalwhinnie - Paragraph 11.10.3 - Yes.

Dinnet - Paragraph 11.11.3 - Yes.

Dalnain Bridge - Paragraph 11.12.3 - Yes.

Killiecrankie - Paragraph 11.13.2 - Yes.

Kincraig - Paragraph 11.14.3 - Yes.

Nethy Bridge - Paragraph 11.15.5 - Yes.

Tomintoul - Paragraph 11.16.6 - Yes.

Issue 6 – Support for our Rural Areas - Paragraph 12.8 - No. Prefer option 2, so that rural development does not damage the "special qualities".

Issue 7 – Connectivity and Communications - Paragraph 13.12 - Yes.

Other Issues - Paragraph 14.1 - Yes.

Supplementary Guidance - Paragraph 15.3 - Yes.

Ref 22 Name Goldcrest (Ltd)

Response

We act on behalf of Goldcrest (Highland) Ltd who developed new housing to the north and south of Lynstock Crescent/Lurg Road in the recent past. As they control additional land to the north/east of this housing we would propose that additional residential development is both logical and desirable. This site received positive feedback at the recent public consultation and most especially when this site could deliver the clearly stated requirement for affordable homes.

We have identified the entire area controlled by our client. This is a wooded area part of which has been identified as ancient woodland. However we would suggest any development in the short and medium term be extended along the south of the site / to the north of Lynstock crescent/ Lurg Road. There are opportunities to further develop in possibly the medium and long term in much lower densities areas within the wood as there are also to the north west of the site where the site also enjoys access to the public road(s).

Development in the short term is deliverable; it has a road frontage, and drainage infrastructure is available as a result of the most recent developments in this area.

(Maps supplied)

Ref 23 Name The Clouds Partnership

Response

1. Introduction

We are instructed on behalf of The Clouds Partnership to prepare and submit a response to the Main Issues Report Consultation. Our preference would be to receive future correspondence by email.

We not content for our details and comments to be made available to the public.

2. Summary of Representation

This response sets out our comments on Issue 1 (Q1); 2 (Q2); 3 (Q3); 4 (Q4); 5 (Q's 5, 6 & 7); 6 (Q25); 7 (Q26); other Issues (Q27); and Supplementary Guidance (Q28).

We also take this opportunity to make comment on the following other issues and settlements:

- the Strategic Environmental Assessment;
 - the Supplementary Guidance; and
 - the settlements of Aviemore and An Camas Mor,
- which are all set out in more detail below.

3. Our Comments

Issue 1 (Q1) Special qualities of the park

We support the preferred approach, utilising a policy based approach to the protection of the special qualities of the park, whilst providing additional spatial guidance to conserve and enhance the designated nature conservation sites, habitat connectivity, wildness and landscape character.

However, the spatial guidance must be in a useable format particularly for those without internet access and, if map based, it should be at a scale which allows for detailed interpretation for small scale proposals. We would also recommend taking in to account the Reporters Recommendations on the Aberdeenshire LDP, particularly in relation to mapping of designations. Discussion was held at the Hearing Session about the appropriateness of mapping in the LDP datasets that were not the Council's, and could be subject to change and review outwith the LDP process leading to inconsistencies.

Issue 2 (Q2) Resources

We support Option Two and do not agree with the implication that this approach implies that the areas of

opportunity have unconstrained options. An "area of search" simply rules out the areas that are obviously not appropriate for one reason or another, and allows for a focussed search to be undertaken within an area deemed generally to have the capacity to absorb/accommodate certain forms of development. Any development proposed within the area of search would need to demonstrate that it accords with the other policies of the plan.

It is ultimately for the Planning System (plan led) to provide certainty and to identify where development will, and will not, take place. This is particularly relevant in the case of the Zero Waste Plan which revises the previous guidance on the "proximity principle" and now enables shared resources to be provided for a number of authorities, with a firm preference for the planning system to lead the way in identifying sites for the network of waste management facilities required by the area. There may therefore be merit in the CNP entering in to discussion with neighbouring authorities who are already considering proposals for Energy from Waste facilities to guide the locations of the other facilities that may be required within the park.

Issue 3 (Q3) Supporting our Communities

We generally agree with Option One the current approach.

We feel that this approach strikes the appropriate balance between flexibility and direction and allows for the market to dictate what uses go where particularly in the larger settlements adjacent to the A9 corridor.

However, whilst we consider this to be appropriate for the larger scale proposals in the major settlements,

provision should also be made for ad-hoc economic development proposals in the more remote areas, outwith the major settlements where a locational requirement can be demonstrated.

Issue 4 (Q4) Affordable Housing

Whilst we broadly support the preferred approach (Option Three) we do not feel that the approach advocated, relying on those sites already in Adopted Local Plans, would be in compliance with new National Government Guidance in PAN 2/2010.

In particular, the PAN changes the definition of "effectiveness" which should be applied in Housing Land Audits and in identifying the five year supply in Local Plans. Providing continuity of land allocations to sites in existing Local Plans which have not been subject to a Planning Application within the previous five year period artificially constrains the land supply by continuing sites which have no realistic prospect of delivering housing numbers within the Plan period.

An alternative approach to consider could be along the following lines:

" ... support the needs of communities by ensuring all main and other settlements have some options for future development. Review existing housing sites in Adopted Local Plans and assess their "effectiveness" against recently issued Government Guidance. Remove land allocations from non-effective land, or amend their phasing, and allocate new effective sites for delivery in the short term On these sites require a benchmark of 25% affordable housing unless

a greater percentage is justified through the Housing Need & Demand Assessment."

The implications of this Option would be:

- to show sites that have Planning Permission already;
- identify development opportunities beyond the Local Development Plan period for delivery in the longer term or draw down in the short term if required;
- secure an effective 5 year supply of housing land;
- give flexibility to ensure all communities have options for new development; and
- ensure a reasonable number of affordable units are provided within all new developments, and within the 5 year plan period.

There could be significant benefits in adopting an approach of this sort.

Issue 5 (05) Spatial Strategy

Whilst we would broadly support the preferred option we were disappointed to note that there is no reasonable alternative to this put forward for consideration.

We also support the identification of sites covering a 20 year period (in three phases 1-5years, 6-11 years and 12-20years), however, object to the sites identified.

Issue 5 (Q6) Spatial Strategy -An Camas Mor

We object to the proposed continuation of An Camas Mar to the new LDP. Given the pending legal challenge to the continuation of An Camas Mar to the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan, we find it very disappointing to see that the National Park Authority have not deemed it appropriate to suggest any reasonable alternatives to this, particularly given the Court date on 10th - 13th January.

Depending on the outcome, this could have a significant implication for the contents of this Local Development Plan, the Planning Permission in principal granted and to the ability to provide a five year effective land supply either within the currently Adopted Local Plan timeframes, or within the emerging Local Development Plan timeframe.

It is also interesting to note from the Council's illustration of the An Camas Mar development in the MIR that it appears to contain no element of mixed use, or employment, at all bringing into question the "mixed

use/sustainable community" badge attached to it. We also note that, from the Housing & Population

background paper, and Housing Land Audit, the original anticipated capacity was 1,500 dwellings, however, in the programming of sites there seems to be an expectation that this site will deliver some 2,050 dwellings over the 20 year period shown. Housing completions across Scotland are at an all time low, and running at approximately the rate of sale, being around 2 per month. The expectation that this site can achieve what equates to 9 dwellings per month is not realistic, and will result in a shortfall of provision both of open market, and affordable housing in the short, medium and longer terms of this and future LDP's.

Whilst we are aware of the consideration of the land at Kinakyle by the Reporters at the recent Local Plan

Examination, we do feel that this area presents an option for the National Park to meet housing and

employment land supply, particularly in the short term, by allocating land at Kinakyle for a mixed use

development comprising:

- strategic employment;
- associated residential, including affordable housing and retirement housing development;
- recreational and community facilities;
- improved footpath network, and sustainable transport.

And that this, or another suggestion, should have been included in the MIR as a reasonable

alternative for

consideration. An indicative timeline from receiving an allocation (say Dec 2013) would reasonably be estimated at:

- Full Planning Permission in place- Jun 2015;
- Building Warrant & other consents- Feb 2016;
- Construct bridge(s) over railway- Feb- Oct 2016;
- Commence on site- November 2016;
- Completion of (say) 400 unit mixed use allocation approx. 2027.

Assuming a build rate @say a realistic 2-3 dwellings per month, and assuming a 400 unit allocation, this would deliver approximately 72 dwellings in years 0-5, 180 dwellings in years 5-10, and 148 dwellings in years 10-15. Subject to flood risk and other assessments being undertaken there is up to 71 acres of land available which provides ample opportunity for a range and mix of uses to be provided on site with better recreational use made of the riverside location. We will await the outcome of the legal challenge in January to determine how much to invest in demonstrating the effectiveness and deliverability of this site over An Camas Mar and will make further representations at Proposed Plan Stage.

Issue 5 (Q7) Spatial Strategy - Aviemore

We object to the proposed spatial strategy for Aviemore. Again, and as set out above, we find it disappointing that there are no reasonable alternatives put forward for the growth of Aviemore. We acknowledge the Preferred Option as being to continue land with existing Planning Permission and land

identified in the current Local Plan to provide opportunities for economic growth and to identify no additional land however, we do not feel that this complies with Government Guidance set out in PAN 2/2010 particularly that relating to Housing Land Audits and the "effectiveness" of the housing land supply.

Land with existing permission comprises part of the "established" supply, however an assessment must now be made of its "effectiveness" and its ability to deliver a housing unit within this five year plan period. It is simply not sustainable to persist with sites which have done little more than to secure a consent and implement it in meeting the needs of the settlement over the next five to seven years.

We feel that an alternative (as set out above) should have been considered in the SEA and put forward as an option for the growth of Aviemore to the south to receive peoples' views. This is particularly relevant with the forthcoming Court date to hear the legal challenge to the An Camas Mor allocation which could have a significant impact on housing delivery in this area.

Issue 6 (Q25) Support for Rural Areas

We broadly support the Preferred Approach (Option Three).

Issue 7 (Q26) Connectivity and Communications

We broadly support the Preferred Approach (Option Two) provided the link between improvements and the need brought about by the development is clearly demonstrated in line with Circular 1/2010.

Other Issues (Q27)

Having reviewed the Monitoring Report we are content that the topics being carried forward from the Adopted Local Plan, and the general approach they set out is appropriate. Where Policies are to be amended or updated, we will await the detailed draft Policies before commenting in detail.

Supplementary Guidance -

Having reviewed the list of Supplementary Guidance topics, and the monitoring report we consider them to be appropriate however, in drafting the LDP Policy, and the Supplementary Guidance, we would direct the Authority to the Reporter's findings of the Highland-wide LDP Examination and Aberdeenshire LDP Examination particularly in regard to their consideration of objections to the quantity and detail contained in Supplementary Guidance and the policy basis that they are prepared to support.

(Map supplied)

Ref 24 Name Gordon Bulloch

Response

Issue 1 – Special Qualities of the Park - Paragraph 5.11

There is not enough information in this paragraph to make an informed judgment as to how the preferred option will be implemented.

The key to map 1b identifies various landscape categories, but does not give any indication on how these landscape categories will be used to guide development to appropriate sites.

Whether this approach will work will depend on the detailed maps and the associated guidance.

Issue 2 – Resources/Reducing our Consumption

Paragraph 6.2 - Effective management of consumption of resources within the park needs to include management of population. This is clearly a sensitive issue, but resource management without consideration of size of population is close to being meaningless.

Paragraph 6.11 - The preferred approach would seem to be the best way forward, but the detail is key to this approach succeeding. The preferred approach, however, needs to include management of population and also management of the number of residences which are used only as second homes (holiday homes) and which remain empty for large parts of the year.

Issue 3 – Support for our Communities

Paragraph 7.9 - The preferred approach seems to be the best way forward.

Paragraph 7.10 - The map showing key employment sites and areas of visitor pressure is interesting, but it is not clear how this will be used to help focus new development on areas with greatest capacity for new growth. For example, identifying an area of high visitor pressure, does not indicate what type of development would be appropriate to satisfy this visitor pressure or whether the specific area has the capacity for expanding development without having a detrimental effect on existing activities.

Issue 4 – Housing/Affordable Housing - Paragraph 8.15

There are some flaws in the preferred approach. Focussing new housing on those sites already in adopted Local Plans limits options and ability to react to changing circumstances. The new Development Plan process should be used to question the allocations in the adopted Local Plan and look to see if other more appropriate sites should be included. If this opportunity is not taken, the new plan is just an extension of the old plan. It is unclear what is meant by a 'benchmark' of 25% affordable

Issue 5 – Spatial Strategy

Paragraph 9.12 - The preferred option on spatial strategy is in the main the appropriate way

forward, however the opportunity should be taken within the Development Plan process to properly review sites allocated for housing rather than simply justifying the existing allocations. Paragraph 9.13 - The simple traffic light system used to consider sites within the preferred settlement strategy is biased towards justifying the status quo. For example site 12d in Grantown-on-Spey is considered as a whole, rather than whether parts of this large site could be suitable for sustainable development.

Paragraph 9.15 - In Grantown-on-Spey, the preferred option of only including site 12f in the Development Plan for housing is too simplistic and results in all planned development being focussed on one site. Several small parts of site 12d combined with a much smaller development on 12f would satisfy projected housing needs whilst providing a more balanced, natural and sustainable approach to housing development in Grantown-on-Spey and avoid the 'scheme' effect found in other settlements.

Paragraph 9.16 - I intend to provide a separate written response to Section 10 regarding Grantown-on-Spey.

Issue 3 – Support for our Communities - Paragraph 7.3

An important part of maintaining sustainable communities is ensuring that there is a policy managing second homes within the Park. Too many second homes within communities will have an adverse affect on the economic health of these communities.

This response focuses on Section 1 0.6 (Grantown-on-Spey) of the Main Issues Report.
Section 10.6.1

I support the inclusion of the Grantown-on-Spey economic development issues in this section and I would hope that these would be expanded on in the draft Development Plan. In particular, the extension of the steam railway into Grantown-on-Spey is very important for the future prosperity of the town. I am surprised to see how little this key economic development factor for the whole of the Park is mentioned in the Main Issues Report - it appears to be only briefly mentioned in the Grantown-on-Spey and Boat of Garten subsections of Section 10. Also there is no mention of this matter at all in the draft Cairngorms National Park Plan.

I would dispute that Grantown-on-Spey has "a good variety of community facilities". The main omission is a useable community hall facility, a facility that most much smaller settlements in the park have. The potential of developing the YMCA building as a community centre seems to have been lost, and I understand that currently the building is for sale.

Section 10.6.2

Using the existing housing allocation identified in the adopted Local Plan as the basis for future development opportunities runs the risk of missing the opportunity to properly consider other potential sites in the town and just unthinkingly rolling-over the adopted Local Plan. There is no recognition that other significant infill developments have either taken place in the past year or so, have planning permission or may be the subject of a planning application for housing in the near future. The current adopted Local Plan is far too simplistic on housing allocation for the town and does not reflect the real position on housing development that is currently happening. This mistake must not be made in the new Development Plan.

Section 10.6.3

Mistakes in the marking up of the H1 housing site boundary which originated from The Reporters' Inquiry Report into the now adopted Local Plan, and promulgated into the Supplementary Guidance H1 Development Brief have been transferred into the map referenced in this sub-section. Back in September 2010, I detailed this error in my response to the consultation on the H 1 Development Brief. I repeat these comments along with a plan

illustrating the error.

The northern boundary of the site (H1) is incorrectly presented in the plan of the site. I specifically draw your attention to the boundary line between Revoan and our house, The Dulaig. We assume that the intention was to draw this boundary along the ridge line of the old river terrace (as is the case with the northern boundary line west of Revoan). If this was the intention then the area of the site presented is overstated in this part of the site. The correct line of the site boundary at this point should be as shown in the marked up plan attached to this letter.

There is another issue emanating from the H1 Development Brief that should be addressed. The Development Brief states that a ruined stone wall on the northern boundary of the site should be reinstated. This ruined stone wall is some 20-25 metres to the south of the current boundary line of the proposed H1 site between the houses Revoan and The Dulaig. For clarity, the line of the ruined stone wall is also shown on the marked up plan attached to this letter. I request that the opportunity is taken in the draft Development Plan to correct these mistakes. The more professional amendment is to move this boundary back to the line of the ruined stone wall.

Question 9

I do not agree with the preferred option for housing development in Grantown-on-Spey. The simplistic approach of planning to have only one area identified in the new Development plan came out of what I consider to be erroneous decisions made by the Reporters in their 2009 Inquiry Report. Their simplistic decision to recommend removal of the whole of the Mossie area from the housing allocation lacked the evidence to support their recommendation: Without doubt there are major environmental constraints on the development of the whole Mossie area, however these constraint do not apply equally across all of the site, and I am sure there are limited areas. Within this site where small scale development would be just as acceptable or even more acceptable than the H1 housing site. The simple traffic light system used within the supporting Site Analysis Report to evaluate the three Grantown-on-Spey sites 12d, e and f is biased towards justifying the housing site allocation status quo. For example, site 12d (The Mossie) is considered as a whole, rather than whether parts of this large site could be suitable for sustainable development.

The preferred option of only including the H1 site in the new Development Plan for housing is too simplistic and results in all planned future development being focussed on one site. The projected housing needs for Grantown-on-Spey would be more sustainably satisfied by:

1. including some of the infill sites with planning permission or for which planning applications may be being developed. These sites strategically could be best developed for affordable housing or at least housing suitable for first time buyers.
2. including several small parts of the Mossie area which are environmentally much less sensitive and which would look like infill or minor extensions to adjoining existing development.
3. including a much smaller scale development within the H1 site. This would provide a much more balanced and sustainable approach to future housing development in Grantown-on-Spey and would avoid the development of a housing 'scheme' look which is all too often found in other Park settlements. Part of the sustainability of this approach would be that the various small development sites would be more suited to construction by local building companies and the consequent employment of local people.

(Map supplied)

Ref 25 Name Michael Franklin

Response

The Aberdeenshire Rural Partnerships Federation (ARPF) is a loosely knit body comprising Rural Partnerships which either support community groups or carry out their own projects. The Partnerships work with Aberdeenshire Council guided by a Service Level Agreement. The work done by these partnerships is highly valued by Aberdeenshire Council and is regarded as yielding good value for money. The formation of such-a body whereby Development Trusts (as opposed to Community Councils) could exchange experiences and knowledge could prove useful in within the National Park. Such organisations operating within the park face a difficulty in holding meetings due to excessive journey times. The value of the proposed group would therefore be increased if effective ways of exchanging information electronically (e.g. Face book group) were established. Links with ARPF and other similar groups could be promoted.

Ref 26 Name Walkhighlands

Response

I am responding on behalf of myself and Walkhighlands, a business based in the park. I agree to the response being made public.

Comment is on Issue 4 (Affordable Housing) though this affects issues 1 and 2 as all the issues are interdependent.

We do not support the preferred approach to housing development (Option 3). Tourism is the mainstay of the economy and of employment in the National Park and is dependent on the special qualities of the area. Visitors to the Park come here because the landscape and wildlife provide them with an experience that differs from their everyday life - and key to this is a sense of the more limited scale of the human elements compared to the natural environment found here.

These special qualities would be greatly damaged by taking Option 3.

The housing developments already planned are excessive (particularly An Camas Mor) and, although greatly benefitting the construction sector, the landowner and some businesses in the short term, in the longer term they will lead to the overall decline of the area's tourism-based economy. This is not in the interest of residents of the Park, and a declining economy would only serve to make all housing less affordable to residents in the longer term.

Given this it is key to ensure that any further housing development is only to serve genuine local need - already large housing estates in Aviemore have a large proportion of second homes. With the Scottish Government recommending use is not made of Section 75 residency restrictions in planning applications, the only feasible option which would not damage the local economy (and the special qualities of the Park on which it depends) is to increase the percentage of affordable housing in developments, not decrease it as is suggested. This would be a move from Option 1 towards Option 2.

Ref 27 Name Frank Johnstone

Response

Issue 4 - Housing/Affordable Housing- Paragraph 8.15

The reservations I have must be seen in the context of what has already happened. There has been poorly controlled building development.

Option 3 sounds reasonable, but it is likely to translate into more of the same, uncontrolled urban sprawls. I therefore am against. Instead I favour option 2. Surely the start should be what is the best for this park, not just where is the money. Then thought could be given to possible solutions to funding

Other Settlements - 11 .5 Boat of Garten - Paragraph 11 .5.3

I don't agree with the preferred option or with option 2. The need is perceived to be affordable housing. Therefore land should be identified and funding sought to provide this. Yes everything is difficult now, but the best option should come first, and then solutions pursued.

(BTW I can't find out where the proposed developments in the preferred option are to be.)

Ref 28 Name Alvie Estate

Response

Q 1 Protect the special qualities of the Park

Only the Special Landscape qualities are listed. Such claimed attributes as "vastness of space, scale and

height", and "contrasting landscapes" are unlikely to be modified by local development. We question

whether option 2 - the preferred approach has many if any advantages over option 1 - the current approach. Strict interpretation of plans and strategies can unreasonably restrict economic development.

We believe that development proposals should be considered on their own merits with plans and strategies being treated as flexible guidelines.

Q 2 Sustainable use of existing resources

Developers can only operate on land which they own or over which they have consent to develop. A

specific development proposal may only be appropriate or cost effective on a limited number of locations.

Too restrictive an approach when approving proposed developments will stifle further growth in our

economy. Some of our resources such as wind, water, trees and grass are renewable and can be exploited

sustainably.

Q 3 Supporting our Communities

Opportunities for investment or development may occur outside existing communities. There should be a

presumption in favour of development proposals that can provide and secure long term employment and

can meet the needs of local communities. Development proposals should be considered on their merits in

preference to strict adherence to spatial guidelines or current visitor pressure.

Q 4 Affordable Housing

The most affordable housing is rented accommodation close to the work place of the tenant.

The shortage of rented accommodation is the result of taxation discouraging the private sector who own land to build or renovate houses to rent. Taxation is a Westminster issue and needs to be addressed at that level.

A work force in rented accommodation is more willing to move to where their skills are in demand than those who own their own homes. As the cost of transport rises, living in close proximity to a person's place of work will become more important. The Planning Authority is exacerbating this situation by their presumption against housing in the countryside. Requiring developers to provide a percentage (25%) of homes at below cost to housing associations results in houses built for open market sale being priced higher and even less affordable. This creates a wider gap between "affordable homes" and the open market price of houses. The promotion of tourism and the National Park as an attractive place to live, have a second (holiday) home and retire is also forcing up demand. If private sector landowners can be persuaded to build new homes or renovate existing homes for rent the need for more affordable accommodation would be met without the need for affordable home requirements being placed on housing developers. As existing landowners already own their land, houses for rent could be provided significantly cheaper than through housing developers. If houses are built for rent this would reduce the proportion of houses in our communities being purchased as holiday homes and discourage speculative housing developments. If the Planning Authority relaxed their presumption against houses being built outside existing communities, in designated areas and in plantations on ancient woodland sites, far more of the demand for affordable accommodation could be met where it is required. We should not be giving priority to the habitat of an imported Swedish bird (the capercaillie) over housing for local residents who work in the locality. Rather than the Planning Authority identifying the location of future housing developments the Authority should be more flexible in accepting locations chosen by the landowner to meet identified local needs.

Q 5 Spatial Strategy

We do not agree with the preferred option.

Most residents who work in the countryside also wish to live in and retire to houses in the countryside. The presumption against houses in the countryside is helping to destroy the character of existing settlements by adding to their urban sprawl and increasing the number and distance of vehicular journeys by people having to commute to work.

Many of the houses being built by housing developers for sale are unaffordable to most of the resident

working population and are being purchased as retirement homes and holiday homes. Some settlements

are in danger of being perceived as weekend villages.

The most affordable housing are small groups of houses in the countryside that do not require

tarred

roads, or street lighting and can suffice with local water supplies and local sewage systems. Such developments help preserve the rural nature of our communities and do not add to the urban sprawl of our larger existing settlements.

Scotland's population is relatively static as are job opportunities in the Cairngorms National Park.

The

demand for more new homes is being fuelled by the promotion of the Park as a nice place to settle or

have a holiday home regardless of the local job opportunities.

Further speculative developments building houses for sale that are unaffordable to most of the resident

working population should be discouraged. The Planning Authority should not be promoting greater

growth in the main settlements. Turning small clachans into villages and villages into towns is not what this

predominantly rural area needs.

If we wish to reduce our carbon foot print there needs to be more emphasis on housing residents closer to

their place of work and reopening railway stations for local commuting traffic.

We welcome the development of a proposed new settlement (An Camas Mor) to take pressure off further

development of our existing settlements but question if there is sufficient demand from those seeking work within the immediate locality.

Q 6 An Camas Mor

The demand for speculative housing for sale has been created by the promotion of the National Park area

as a desirable place to live, combined with the discouragement through taxation of landowners building

houses to rent. Under such circumstances developing a new settlement as envisaged is an acceptable

solution.

Q 10 Kingussie

We are concerned that all the identified land for additional housing has been purchased by one speculative developer. We would prefer to see organic growth by the development of individual house

sites by those who wish to reside in these new houses rather than larger scale housing estates developed

by one developer. This could be achieved by only agreeing to individual house plots identified and

promoted by the prospective occupier.

Q 22 Kincaig

The recent development on the north side of the village known as Baldow Park has been mainly purchased by people working or who have worked elsewhere. It expanded the village leaving it even more

disconnected with its surrounding countryside and local businesses than previously. To maintain the

character of this settlement linked to and serving the needs of the surrounding businesses in the countryside, it would be better if houses were built by those intending to live in them and in

response to

local needs. Relatively large scale housing schemes by speculative developers could destroy the character of villages such as Kincaig. Building houses to rent would ensure a supply of affordable homes

that do not end up as retirement or holiday homes.

Whilst further expansion of the village into the arable field H1 will link into existing services, arable fields in

this locality are in short supply. For the previous local plan both the Kincaig & Vicinity Community Council

and the landowner suggested that they would prefer housing on less productive farm land in a field

adjoining Alvie Primary School and in conifer woodland adjoining site H1 . Providing houses within

woodland would have screened these dwellings, blending additional housing in with the rural landscape

thus maintaining a more rural landscape character. This proposal was rejected on the grounds that the

adjoining conifer woodland was a plantation on an ancient woodland site. This particular plantation

replaced a previous conifer plantation planted around 1870, prior to which the land was occupied by scrub

woodland. We regard the loss of the arable field to housing as a greater loss to the biodiversity and rural

economy than the less productive field beside Alvie Primary School and parts of the conifer woodland. We

suggest that field H1 together with the field to the north of H1 beside Alvie Primary School plus adjoining

woodland should all be designated as suitable for housing. This would provide more flexibility and allow at

least part of field designated H1 to be retained for farming.

If field H1 is to be developed it would help maintain the rural character of this village if houses are fitted into the landscape around a central wet area in this field H1 and extended both into the adjoining conifer

woodlands and the other side of the 89152 to the north in the field adjoining Alvie Primary school.

We welcome the retention of the area surrounding Baldow Smithy delineated in blue on the map and

marked as ED1 for industrial development. There have been a number of enquiries from potential

businesses to develop and utilise this site.

Q 25 Support for our Rural Areas

Areas out with established settlements provide opportunities for primary production and processing

activities such as recycling, wind turbines and sawmilling that are inappropriate in close proximity to

dwellings.

We welcome the acceptance that small scale housing development is appropriate in the countryside which

can help provide housing close to the place of work of local residents. People who have worked most of

their lives in the countryside often prefer to retire to dwellings in the countryside, at or close to

the area

they previously lived and worked.

Providing houses in the countryside for rent rather than sale will help prevent such houses being purchased as holiday homes.

We agree with the preferred option but are concerned that proposed developments that have the potential to make the area more self sufficient, provide jobs and inward investment, may be rejected because it is perceived they might compromise the landscape.

Q 26 Connectivity and Communications

Re-opening some railway stations and providing additional local railway services will help reduce our

reliance on cars and add to the character of the Park and the experience of visitors. Courtesy coaches and

other such forms of transport should be encouraged.

There are opportunities to develop cycle routes along the straths between communities and maintain

walking tracks through the uplands.

We question if the proposal to charge developers for the maintenance of access routes will be counterproductive. Proposed developers of assets we desire should not be penalised through taxation or

development requirements

Q 27 Other Issues

Cultural heritage has been neglected in contrast to environmental conservation. Many structures of

historical interest that have been entrusted to our Local Authorities have been neglected. There are

opportunities for better interpretation of our history and culture.

Developer contributions can have unintended consequences. They can discourage further investment or

in the case of housing make dwellings on the open market more unaffordable.

Q 28 Supplementary Guidance

We welcome supplementary guidance but have concerns that those tasked with writing these guidance

documents may not be adequately equipped to provide this guidance.

Ref 29 Name Elizabeth Johnstone

Response

Other Settlements - 11.5 Boat of Garten - Paragraph 11.5.1

Very good community feel just now. Important to conserve that

Other Settlements - 11.5 Boat of Garten - Paragraph 11.5.3

No to the preferred option. No to alternative option as the sites are unclear. Very important to prioritise 'Affordable Housing'. Not to promote urban sprawl but to think carefully about where small pockets of publicly funded housing could be situated. I appreciate that this may be a slow process but better to proceed slowly and ensure some housing that really meets the needs of local people who require it without undue damage to the environment of the village.

Ref 30 Name Jane Palmer

Response

Issue 4 – Housing/Affordable Housing - Paragraph 8.15

I do not support the preferred Option (option 3) of Question 4

I support Option 2 of question 4 for 100% affordable housing where needed for people working in the park or with a family connection. The housing should be affordable because of the predominantly low income jobs in the part as indicated in the report.

I do not support second homes, luxury homes or holiday homes in the Park.

Ref 31 Name Ballater & Crathie Community Council

Response

Preamble

CNPA has published two principal documents for public comment: The Main Issues Report (MIR), a precursor to the Local Development Plan that will replace the Local Plan which was adopted on 29th October 2010. The draft National Park Plan (NPP) for the period 2012-2017. The comments contained in this statement are submitted by us (Ballater & Crathie Community Council) on behalf of the residents in the area we serve.

Question no. 4, MIR page 37 (Issue 4 – Housing/Affordable Housing)

How and where can we meet the housing need in our communities – open market, affordable, local needs?

Summary response: Ballater's affordable housing requirement remains unclear and this uncertainty needs to be accommodated by the delivery methodology. We do not believe there is a current justification for new open market housing in Ballater, in view of the number of not-normally-occupied dwellings. We do not believe Option 1 (current approach) or Option 3 (preferred approach) are appropriate to Ballater's housing challenges. We would support a variant on Option 2, as described below. A more innovative approach to funding of affordable housing in Ballater is needed, irrespective of which option is adopted.

Detailed response:

Unclear requirement for affordable housing. We are concerned that we found no evidence in the documentation of a clear definition of the requirement for housing at the settlement level, neither for Ballater, nor any other location.

Table 17 on pages 34 and 35 of the MIR gives details by settlement of the status of current permissions, allocations and effectiveness, ie land supply and phasing of building over a 20 year period.

Estimates of the number of affordable houses needed across the Park have varied widely and CNPA has specified no numbers for Ballater. This uncertainty needs to be accommodated, preferably by adopting a flexible delivery method.

The need for new open market housing. We see no need for new open market housing at this time. This is demonstrated by the large number of not-normally-occupied properties in Ballater, owned by people either as an "investment", a second home, a holiday "let" or a future retirement home. These properties make up more than 25 per cent of all dwellings in Ballater, which represents a redundant surplus of open market housing in Ballater and a source of frustration for local (especially young) people who cannot compete in the open market and are thus reliant on other arrangements, or having to leave Ballater. Large scale development of primarily open market housing, with a proportion of the total as affordable, will aggravate the proliferation of not-normally-occupied properties, and exacerbate this problem.

Option 1 (current approach); Option 3 (CNPA preference). We do not favour the preferred option (Option 3). It is insufficiently differentiated from the current approach (Option 1), to which we are

also opposed. In so far as it differs from the existing approach, Option 3 takes the wrong direction, because it appears to permit opportunities for the arbitrary imposition of more ad hoc private development than the current approach. This would not be in the interests of the Ballater community.

We are concerned that the documentation appears to treat the subject of housing numbers as a purely economic exercise, with limited regard for community integrity or cohesion. In communities like Ballater this will, over time, put those communities at risk, both socially and economically, as the village loses its appeal to people as a place to visit. Ballater needs an alternative to the existing approach but not the “preferred approach” offered as Option 3.

Under Options 1 and 3, the provision of affordable housing would take place at a pace to suit the developer, which might not meet the housing needs of residents. Indeed, we understand that the future development of BL/H1 is effectively “on hold” pending the convenience of the developer (refer to minutes of BOVOF Housing Partnership meeting dated 9th September 2011). There are indications that development of BL/H1 is going to be delayed due to the current house market conditions, so the start date for affordable homes is already held up by the open market.

Option 2. This focuses all new development on the provision of affordable housing by only identifying sites for 100 per cent affordable housing (bearing in mind the existing consents) and is a more appropriate approach to dealing with Ballater’s affordable housing needs.

CNPA’s appraisal of Option 2 includes the following comments:

- “Shows sites that have planning permission already.
- “Focuses new development solely on the provision of much needed affordable development.
- “Relies on all new development finding appropriate funding streams to ensure projects are economically viable.
- “With limited land identified there will be little new development other than that which has permission already, limiting the amount of affordable development.”

The 3rd comment seems to imply that Option 2 is at a distinct disadvantage against other options, which are claimed to offer a source of funding from the developer to the extent of 25% of all dwellings. This is liable to misinterpretation, because the contribution from the developer is in serviced plots only (at a discount – not free of charge) rather than completed homes. Money still has to be found to buy these plots and build the houses, so there is probably minimal, if any advantage financially in Options 1 and 3 over Option 2.

The 4th comment above on Option 2 seems to suggest that there will be a drying up of the supply of affordable housing because no further land will have been released for open market housing. Our investigations (see Ballater Land Inventory) show that there is capacity within the existing settlement boundary for around 160 affordable homes, which would be adequate for the foreseeable future. The stock of affordable housing in Ballater could be sustainable over the long term if it remained affordable in perpetuity. Thus our preference would be for rented affordable housing, in order to prevent “leakage” into the private sector. We repeat there is no quantified requirement for new open market housing. The balance of housing numbers between open market and affordable homes in Ballater can be better managed if not-normally-occupied dwellings are included in the equation, as a potential housing resource. In this respect, we note that the Scottish Government is considering the possibility of allowing local authorities to raise council tax levels significantly on certain categories of not-normally-occupied dwellings, for the purpose of encouraging owners to make these properties available for rent or sale. Consultation of the public on this new legislation is underway at present.

B&CCC’s proposed approach. Our own proposal for provision of affordable housing comprises the following main elements:

- a) Focus on affordable housing only,
- b) Abandon BL/H1 as a development site,
- c) Identify and allocate brown field and infill locations for building small numbers of affordable homes inside the village boundary and

- d) Identify existing properties potentially suitable for conversion to affordable housing. This is a variant on Option 2 offered (but not recommended) on page 37 of the MIR. We believe the approach that we are advocating would:
- a) Provide a more natural way to integrate affordable homes into the community than by placing small groups of affordable houses into a new open market development.
 - b) Alleviate the dependency of affordable housing supply on the development of open market housing, for which there is currently minimal local demand.
 - c) Benefit from easier access to services immediately local to the development / redevelopment site, helping to bring down the cost of affordable homes.
 - d) Enable the pace of development of affordable homes to meet the emerging understanding of the real need, which is currently unclear.
 - e) Protect the integrity of Ballater's setting and community, both of which are vital to its economic survival.
 - f) Enable more of the construction work to be carried out by local builders.
 - g) Help with improvement of existing buildings in the older part of the village as a result of their conversion to affordable homes.

These points are discussed in more detail in our Affordable Housing Policy which can be found on the B&CCC web site: www.ballaterandcrathie.org.uk .

With this strategy in mind, we have developed a draft inventory of some of the potential sites around the village that could be used for affordable housing. In the development of this document (Ballater Land inventory) we have identified sufficient capacity for about 160 affordable houses within the existing settlement boundary (ie, that which existed prior to the adoption of the present local plan on 29th October 2010). We enclose a copy of the Ballater Land Inventory for CNPA's consideration and request that a meeting between CNPA and B&CCC be held to ensure this important opportunity receives due consideration.

Funding of affordable housing. CNPA has confirmed that, as of 5th August 2011, it had had no formal assurances from any organisation regarding the availability of funding for affordable housing on BL/H1. So, it seems that Options 1 and 3 do not offer any financial advantage over our proposed alternative.

Due to the present economic circumstances, a more creative approach to the funding of affordable housing is needed, irrespective of which option is pursued.

Question no. 8, MIR page 53 (Issue 5 – Spatial Strategy)

How and where should development happen in the National Park?

Summary response: Local opinion is opposed to significant growth of Ballater, eg by the development of BL/H1. Housing development beyond Monaltrie Park will lead to alienation of its residents from the existing community. Monaltrie Park must not become landlocked by housing development but allowed to expand as needed to accommodate additional recreation facilities, especially for young people. Climate change may result in the reclassification of the farm land at BL/H1 from Class 3.2 to Class 3.1, at which level of quality there is a presumption against development.

Detailed response:

Local opinion. CNPA still has the area north east of Monaltrie Park (BL/H1) zoned for up to 250 dwellings. A significant proportion of these are likely to be not-normally-occupied. Many residents have told us that there are already too many not-normally-occupied houses in Ballater and are concerned that further open market development will aggravate this.

The B&CCC communities' survey in the autumn of 2010 showed very widespread views to the effect that Ballater should not grow in size, so that its attractive setting and strong community spirit are preserved. The comments we received ranged from very positive (eg "it's the perfect size") to negative (eg, "if they build a lot of houses here it will ruin the place").

Separation of BL/H1 from Ballater. The concept of building out H1 beyond Monaltrie Park, in the

context of the assumptions about who would live there (ie an aging population of in-migrants), about CNPA's aspiration to reduce car usage in the CNP, about not creating a polarised or split community, and so on, leads to a probable scenario such as:

- a) The open market housing on BL/H1 is likely to be bought largely by older people (40-60 years) in-migrating from other areas.
- b) CNPA aspires to reduce car usage, encouraging people to walk or cycle about the place.
- c) The farthest part of BL/H1 is a 10-15 minute walk from the centre of Ballater, in fair conditions. The far edge of H1 is further from the centre than any other part of Ballater.
- d) In winter, elderly residents will not move around on foot or by bicycle, but will resort to their cars.
- e) They will attempt to drive to Ballater but, with up to 250 additional households, will find traffic congestion and parking a problem.
- f) So, they will drive, or take a bus, in the other direction to Aboyne for their shopping.
- g) The consequence will be social and physical separation of H1 residents from the rest of this community and impoverishment of local businesses in Ballater.

Constraints on Monaltrie Park. Under the proposed spatial strategy for Ballater, Monaltrie Park would become restricted and land-locked by housing development. When the widely known problem of the lack of facilities for Ballater youth begins to be addressed effectively, as it must, it is highly likely that Ballater youth will want to have planning applications submitted for outdoor recreation facilities, some of which will demand significant amounts of space, such as a skate board park, BMX track, etc. These will have no other place to go than Monaltrie Park. This issue requires active attention, as it does not appear to have been addressed at all in any of the consultation documents. Thus, new housing should not be located north east of the existing Monaltrie Park. New housing, if it were justified in numbers beyond the capacity of the other sites we have identified for affordable housing, would be better located inside and close to the entrance to Monaltrie Park, and be progressively "topped up" over the very long term by further development – if Ballater decides that it wants to expand physically. Monaltrie Park's north eastern boundary could be "elastic", moving out as needed to accommodate new recreational facilities. The only thing that would need to move in an expansion scenario is the south western boundary of Monaltrie Park and maybe some of the recreation facilities. This would offer two benefits: Residents of new housing would live closer to the rest of the community. The constraint on development of additional outdoor facilities that already exists in Monaltrie Park would be lifted.

By locating Monaltrie Park beyond its present location, access to the park for primary school pupils might be impeded. If this were to become a problem, it could be overcome by converting part of the primary school grounds to a playing field. There is no reason why Monaltrie Park cannot be located beyond (but probably still overlapping) its existing footprint.

Land quality at BL/H1. The Macaulay Land Use Research Institute has indicated that, as a result of climate change over the next few decades, there is a significant probability that the farm land on BL/H1 would be upgraded from Class 3 Division 2 to Class 3 Division 1, at which level of quality there is a presumption against development, which, if it proceeded, would lead to permanent loss of good quality farm land. Relevant email correspondence is enclosed.

Para 3.19 of the MIR states: "You may feel some of the sites contained in Background Evidence Report 5 are preferable to those chosen in the Main Issues Report. You should therefore indicate this in your response." On the basis of the housing strategy that we have outlined, we take this request by CNPA to be an invitation to submit our list of potential sites for wholly affordable housing, as we have done earlier in this document.

Attachments:

- 1. Ballater Land Inventory
- DRAFT – FOR DISCUSSION

BALLATER LAND INVENTORY - (This should be read in conjunction with the site analysis spread sheet- supplied)

Introduction

CNPA's approach to the provision of needed affordable housing, of inviting a developer to implement large scale building of open market housing in the hope that this will "spin off" a percentage of affordable dwellings. has not delivered any affordable homes in Ballater, nor does it seem likely to do so in the foreseeable future (reference the minutes of the BOVOF Housing Partnership for BL/H1 meeting on 9TH September 2011, which state: "...due to economic constraints the [BL/H1] development is not likely to take place in the foreseeable future.").

People in Ballater in need of affordable are left with no solution to their housing needs.

B&CCC proposes an alternative strategy for Ballater: small infill and brownfield sites around the village, suitable for affordable housing in small numbers, along with acquisition of suitable not-normally-occupied properties for refurbishment or conversion to affordable housing (where this is viable). This last category is not dealt with here.

This is a summary analysis of some of the infill / brown field opportunities identified around Ballater that B&CCC believes to be potentially suitable for small scale development of affordable homes. The analysis is based on the criteria adopted by CNPA in its Site Analysis document, which accompanies the Main Issues Report (currently published for public consultation).

Readers are asked to understand that the list presented is provisional, for discussion, and that some sites may fall away, whereas others previously discarded or not yet identified may appear later, as conversations develop. In addition to testing sites against the criteria used by CNPA, we have chosen to include consideration of Public Acceptability, a criterion not adopted by CNPA in its own Site Analyses.

The CNPA methodology is somewhat subjective and qualitative only, although we believe it can add value. It uses a "traffic light" system for each criterion on a particular site. Green means there are no problems; amber – some concerns exist but they can probably be overcome, and red – insurmountable problems, development not possible). The list of criteria used by CNPA is as follows: Landscape impact. Ecological impact. Flood risk. Settlement relationship (does it fit in with existing surrounding built environment?). Services & facilities accessibility (shops, schools, libraries, recreation & leisure, etc). In Ballater, this can be taken as green for all sites. Site access. Local transport availability. In Ballater, this can be taken as green for all sites. "Other", meaning miscellaneous items such as availability of utilities, contamination constraints, etc. Overall – a balanced view of the potential site.

The additional criterion of Public Acceptability is also shown on the attached spread sheet. With respect to this criterion, it is not intended that a site should be excluded on the basis that a few individuals don't like it. A site can, however, be excluded on the basis of an openly reasoned case that on balance, development at that particular site would not be good for the Ballater community. We have attempted here to evaluate the Public Acceptability (red, amber or green) for each site, but this is just a starting point for further discussion. In making such a judgement, it may be necessary, in some cases, for people to "think the unthinkable".

We have excluded from this discussion document any sites where we see a criterion that is likely to be classed as red.

A small number of sites that we have identified, while potentially suitable, are clearly not available at this time but could become so in the future. These are annotated on the list as "later" sites, whereas the rest are depicted as "now".

Finally, we have attempted to identify the sites that seem relatively easy to pursue immediately (the "low hanging fruit") and have given these Priority A, meaning that some useful activity can be initiated immediately, even if this is only to initiate investigations / discussion. Those sites which rest seem less amenable to early attention are designated Priority B.

We have not made extensive investigations into the identity of the land owners or their willingness to sell for affordable housing.

This list of notes is intended to be read in conjunction with the spread sheet list attached to these notes.

1. Land by Sluievannachie (Old Line Road). This area of enclosed land, next to the golf course, is ca. 1 hectare, and is generally low lying flat heath land with scattered shrubs & bushes. Ecological sensitivities are not known (assume amber). The site is close to the margin of the latest SEPA indicative flood map for Ballater (so, Flooding is amber) and flood protection is probably feasible for a small development of up to 10 modest homes. The site is in the Conservation Area, and does not appear to breach the settlement boundary. Development might detract from the ambience of the area (so Landscape Impact is indicated amber). Access would be fairly easy (Access green). The site is believed to be privately owned. Public Acceptability green. Overall amber, but set Priority at A, because subject to owner's agreement, it looks quite easy. Overall Amber.
2. Dundarroch Road (south side). The site is owned by Aberdeenshire Council. It lies inside the Conservation Area. Possible legal barriers to use for housing may need to be overcome making "Other" amber. This site could be assigned Priority A for early investigation of the legal position (not necessarily development). The site is populated by bushes and trees but these are mainly birch and sycamore - not oaks (making "Landscape Impact" amber). There is probably space for 6 or more affordable dwellings.
3. Victoria Barracks (Queens Road). The site seems ideal for conversion to at least 10 or 12 affordable homes, if it were ever available – designate as later. Site ownership is not known, nor are the intentions of the present user, so Other is amber, but these could be ascertained fairly easily. Public Acceptability is anticipated to be amber, since evacuation of the site by its present user would, on balance, probably be bad for Ballater's tourism attraction. In the meantime, utilisation of this asset could be increased if (perhaps) the Pipe Band and/or the British Legion could benefit from long term use of part of this facility. Overall amber. Not much can be done at this stage (except for inquiring about the possibility for the Pipe band & British Legion) so Priority is B. Overall amber. Leave this site for later.
4. Mason's Lodge rear garden (Queens Road). Owned by the Masons' Lodge - presumably. Space for 2 modest affordable dwellings in rear garden was identified by the Princes Foundation for the Built Environment in October 2009. Public Acceptability looks green. Priority A. Overall Green, subject to agreement of the owner.
5. Old School (School Lane and Abergeldie Road). This site is currently under consideration for re-development to affordable housing, perhaps up to 10 units. Public Acceptability green. Priority A. Overall Green (subject to feasibility confirmation).
6. Pipe Band/British Legion huts (Provost Craig Road). Site is owned by Invercauld Estate (Col. Farquharson) and is leased to present users for his life time, so designated "later". Existing buildings seem to be in need of some upgrading if they continue in their present use. Could take 2 or perhaps 3 affordable dwellings at some future date, (ie designated as "later"). Public Acceptability green, but present occupants would need to be re-located to an unidentified location (see site 3 above). Hence "Other" is amber. British Legion may wish to relocate when the lease expires. Overall green. Not much can be done immediately, so Priority is B.
7. Old cinema, Queens Rd. The building is thought to be privately owned and probably listed (being investigated with Aberdeenshire Council). This may preclude conversion to affordable housing – eg, new window openings would be needed, making "Other" amber. Building is presently used for storage. Public acceptability is amber, because re-instatement as a cinema has attracted some interest (B&CCC Communities' Survey, autumn 2010). This might require much debate – hence "Other" is amber and Priority is B. Overall amber, subject to owner's willingness to sell.
8. Land behind old petrol station, Station Square, including shop on Braemar Road. This site could be used for affordable housing, or for accommodating the recycle bins presently behind Glen Muick Church

- they used to be located in this area (see Item 10). The site could probably accommodate 3 affordable homes. The existing building appears to have some structural issues. The site has good Access (green) from the overspill car park behind Station Square. Public Acceptability expected to be green. Shop on bridge recently occupied by a new tenant, so designated for later. Priority B. Overall green.

9. Bus depot. Site might have ground contamination, so Other is amber. Owner's identity and intentions of present user are not known. The site, although designated in the local plan for Employment, could be re-considered for longer term affordable housing use, if/when the present user ever vacated it. Public Acceptability unclear – amber? Priority B and timing "later". Overall amber.

10. Car park behind Glen Muick Church. Site was identified by the PFBE in October 2009 as a location for 12 dwellings or live-work units. Could relocate recycle bins to Site 8 (in the vicinity of their previous location). Remaining car and tour coach parking space needs to be checked for adequacy. Concerns re touring buses having to park elsewhere need to be addressed, so Other is amber. Public Acceptability amber. Implications of combination with site 8 need attention. Priority B. Overall amber.

11. Caravan Park (part of). Part of existing site could be used for up to (say) 10 affordable dwellings. Site would need to be open all year – this should be feasible. Large fixed mobile homes could be used, to maintain a sympathetic appearance. Should be Priority A. Public Acceptability possibly green. Flood risk amber. Overall green.

12. Site of Fire Station. Plans of present user (fire service) need to be clarified, as the suitability as a fire station has been challenged (PFBE workshop, October 2009) on grounds that access & egress for fire engines may be impeded in an emergency. An alternative location would be needed. Site is in SEPA indicative flood plain but flood protection is probably feasible (amber). Priority B, Public Acceptability amber. Overall amber. Timing now.

13. Land between Fire Station & Dee Street. Site is in SEPA's indicative flood plain but flood protection is probably feasible. Owner's identity not known. Public Acceptability green, Priority B. Overall amber.

14. Land between Fire Station & river. Site is in SEPA's current indicative flood plain but flood protection may be feasible. Site contains many mature trees, hence Landscape Impact is amber. Public Acceptability amber, Priority B. Ownership not known. Overall amber.

15. Monaltrie Park (part of). A site close to the entrance to Monaltrie Park would be a more logical location for housing than BL/H1, being closer to the village centre. CNPA's aspiration to reduce car travel could be better realised, as elderly residents of the proposed BL/H1 would have easier access to Ballater especially in winter. Monaltrie Park could be made bigger to accommodate further recreational facilities such as a BMX track or a skate board park for young people, for which there is a clear demand, but completely ignored in the MIR. Public Acceptability amber, Priority would probably need to be A, as much change of paradigm will be needed. Overall amber. See also comments on site 20.

16. Land by Sluiemohr. No perceived obstacles to affordable housing on this site. All Green. Priority A.

17. Craigview Road. Although site location is inside SEPA indicative flood plain, flood protection for this small site should be feasible (Flooding amber). Priority B. There may be some uncertainty re ownership (making "Other" amber), otherwise green. Overall is amber.

18. Craigview/N Deeside Roads. Although site location is inside SEPA's indicative flood plain, flood protection for this site should be feasible (Flooding amber). It is said that this site has been sold by Aberdeenshire Council (for an unrevealed commercial use) subject to planning approval. This makes "Other" amber. Rest are green. Priority B pending outcome of planning application & sale agreement.

19. Monaltrie Avenue. Site is believed to be privately owned. Owner's plans not known, so "Other" is amber. Rest are green. Priority B.

20. Primary School grounds. Site is adjacent to primary school & could be ideal for young family affordable housing. Site contains many trees – mainly birch and rowan. Site could include grass area encroaching on Craighendarroch Walk. Alternatively, if the lower end of Monaltrie Park is used for affordable housing (as in site 15 above) school grounds could be changed to small playing field (as proposed by PFBE) to compensate for any accessibility problems for school children using the existing park. All green (Ecology impact could be amber). Priority A.
21. South Deeside Road. Site is just across the river on the bank opposite side of bridge from Council depot. The site is on the very edge of SEPA's indicative flood plain. Flood protection should be feasible (amber). Site is just outside the settlement boundary. Access to services (utilities & sewage treatment) might be difficult (amber). Access to the site is not easy (amber). Overall amber. Priority B.
22. Old Station Place. Site is a current open space, adjacent to 28 Sir Patrick Geddes Way. Open Spaces requirements might have to be relaxed a bit, but as Ballater is small and surrounded by open space, this should be acceptable. Public Acceptability amber; the rest, including Overall, are green. Priority A.
23. Pannanich Road open space. Site is well inside SEPA indicative flood plain. Flood protection may not be feasible (Flooding amber). Public Acceptability and Overall are amber. Priority B.
24. Hawthorn Crescent. Site would be big enough only for 1 unit. Otherwise all are Green. Priority A
25. Golf Course. Site is ideal in many respects for a row of up to ca. 20 affordable houses. There may be ecological issues eg with bumble bees (amber). New access (amber) from end of Golf Road would be needed. Site is, strictly speaking, outside the settlement boundary (hence Settlement Relationship amber) but this might not have to be an impediment to its use for affordable housing. Landscape Impact amber. Flood Risk amber. Public Acceptability and Overall are amber. Priority B.

(colour coded spreadsheet also supplied)

2. Email correspondence with Macaulay Land Use Research Institute -
 Yes you are correct that it was me with whom you had the conversation.
 Without actually visiting the site, I cannot be certain that climate is the only constraint - the soil may be quite sandy or gravelly for example - but it is very likely to be the main current constraint. My colleague who produced the map showing predicted change is unfortunately on leave this week, but as far as I can tell from the image I have, this land would be upgraded if climate is the only constraint.
 However I would offer some caution. Climate change itself is still a prediction, before any consideration of how that might affect Land Capability. I'm not sure if a planning authority would consider, or be obliged to consider, as part of their statutory planning role, a research prediction of this type.
 Secondly, although Class 3.1 has a higher degree of protection than lower quality land - see paragraph 97 in the attached - development is not necessarily disallowed.
 Personally I do have a lot of sympathy for minimising the loss of agricultural land to permanent development but my reading of the CNPA paper is that it is already earmarked for development. Or is the paper just a draft?
 I hope my thoughts give you some food for thought.

Ref 32 Name Christopher Roberts

Response

Reference Issue 4 of the proposed draft plan, I very strongly support option 2.

Ref 33 Name Boat of Garten & Vicinity Community Council

Response

Issue 1 – Special Qualities – ‘Spatial guidance’ – it is not clear what this means other than housing development sites. There is a need to protect ‘special qualities’ and ensure ‘sustainable communities’. This balance needs to be clearer in the final document.

Issue 2 – Resources/Reducing our consumption – We support the move towards a low carbon economy. However focusing on ‘key settlements’ is only appropriate if balanced with the needs of all settlements.

Issue 3 – Support for our communities- We agree with the preferred option of ‘Highlight the different communities in the Park and support appropriate opportunities for economic development, services and facilities within them.’ The Station Square Heritage Project came out as the top priority from the Way Forward consultation. This community seeks the continuing support of the CNPA in achieving completion of this project which will enhance both the environment of the village and the heritage potential for both residents and visitors alike.

Issue 4- Housing/Affordable Housing- We strongly support the need for all communities to have some options for future housing development. Currently Boat of Garten does not have any allocated site for housing development. It is essential that this village is regarded as a special case for urgent housing development within the current Local Plan and that additional housing development space is also put into the next Plan for the next 10-20 years. We suggest the benchmark for affordable housing in any development should remain at 25-40%. Maintaining this option will encourage developers to consider the particular needs of an individual community, rather than trying to keep to the minimum.

CNPA policy should indicate support for an increase in Council Housing development as a means of providing social housing for small communities in particular. Policy should also show support for community run housing projects, local lettings policies and the rural housing burden.

Issue 5 – Spatial Strategy- Work on securing housing development in Boat of Garten is underway with the Housing Working Group encompassing all stakeholders.

Options for growth in Boat of Garten

a) business- The old village hall, originally designated as having potential for housing, has recently been sold. Whilst we cannot comment in any detail on proposals being drawn up, it is fair to say that the community is supportive of the new owners’ outline intentions to develop a community café/photographic gallery with some private accommodation at the rear. It may be that plans will have progressed sufficiently for the site not to be included in the next Local Plan if planning consent has already been granted by that stage. However, if it is still relevant to do so, then the site should be marked for both business and residence.

B) the Davall Housing Development Application within the woodland at the north of the village was turned down in November 2011. Although there are some residents who believe strongly that no housing development should take place within the woodland, there remains a majority opinion that there should be the opportunity for some more modest development closer to the edge of the woodland which could encompass a proper entrance road to the new Community Hall, as originally envisaged, relieving the residents of the first section of Craigie Avenue of the burden of hall traffic along the narrow residential road. Ideally this could complement another modest development on the other side of the road.

C) within ‘The Way Forward’ consultation the moor land (ref 0121) was the most frequently

suggested alternative site for housing, if the woodland area was refused. If building eventually occurs on the moor land, it should be screened, at least in part, in order to maintain a similar rural aspect on the approach into the village. An ecological study would need to take account of wading birds in the breeding season, and wild flowers.

D) the site to the rear of Birch Grove (ref 012n) is also seen as a possible site for development. However it is sloping ground with drainage problems and the impact of these problems would need to be assessed. The cul –de- sac of Muirton Place has an open aspect onto the moor land where a road extension could be built. However housing extension here would generate considerable traffic past small housing units with some elderly residents who would be noticeably disadvantaged. In principle the community supports further investigation of this site. It has the advantage of being further away from the woodland but also has the disadvantages of access and boggy sloping ground.

E) completion of Craigie Avenue (ref 012p). This site for approx 6 houses makes sense and is not seen by the vast majority of village residents as impacting adversely on the woodland. However it is known that some residents of this road have reservations about further building so close to the woodland.

F) south of Deshar Road (ref 012h). Historically this site has been considered and rejected as not economically viable. There are overhead power lines which would need to be put underground. The area is sloping and full of granite. It is used regularly for access to the woodland as presently many houses have back garden access to this area. The paths here are busy with people either walking small dogs or taking an off-road short cut to the top end of the village. For the community it would be a site of last resort.

G) adjacent to the football pitch (ref 012o) This area should be maintained in the next plan as it would provide an opportunity for 2-3 council houses. However if other larger developments are agreed on one or more other sites, then it would be preferable to maintain this green strip as amenity land and have the council housing incorporated into the other developments.

H) the school site adjacent to the community hall, marked on the Davall development map, is an area which the community wishes to see placed in the local plan as a site for a replacement school in order to bring the school to within the village footprint. It is recognised that until the school role increases again, such capital expenditure would be unlikely. However the overall sustainability plan for the village through increased housing/business development makes the inclusion of a school site important to the long term future of the village. In the meantime that area of woodland would be guaranteed to remain as woodland for community use.

i) general comments regarding housing development – Given the sensitive nature of the woodland site for capercaillie, the community believes that achieving agreed mitigation proposals is both urgent and an essential prerequisite to housing development wherever the latter is situated in the village. Residents have shown in recent surveys that the woods are well used by them wherever they live in the village. In addition visitor numbers to the village are high, and they too, use the woods for recreation including dog walking, walking and cycling. It is hoped that satisfactory mitigation plans can be achieved through the Housing Working Group.

J) any development sites put into the next Local Plan must be viable. Therefore it is essential that the relevant authorities ensure all landscape character issues and ecological surveys are completed as quickly as possible.

Ref 34 Name Strathdee Properties Ltd

Response

1. INTRODUCTION

The following report is a response to the consultation on the Main Issues Report (MIR) of the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan. The response is written by Halliday Fraser

Munro Planning, chartered town planners, on behalf of Strathdee Properties Ltd. The response is based around topic headings taken from the MIR.

2. ISSUE 1 -SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE PARK

The MIR asks "How can we protect the special qualities of the Park and provide clarity on where development should and should not go?" The preferred approach is through a policy-based approach with additional map-based spatial guidance on designated conservation sites, habitat connectivity, wildness and landscape character.

Generally, a combination of policy and map-based land use planning is accepted as a better approach than simply one or the other. Where the special qualities are not protected under statute then careful consideration should be given to their impact on delivering the visions for each of the settlements. Zoning an area as protected (as shown in Map 1 b) could have serious implications on how settlements might be able to embrace the aims of the Park to create sustainable and more socially and economically diverse communities. The balance between the people who live, work and visit the Park and its environment should allow for some development.

3. ISSUE 4- HOUSING/AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The difficulties with delivering the right type of affordable housing at the right time in the right place have been well documented and debated over recent years. The CNPA preferred approach (Option 3) is to ensure that the needs of all main and other settlements have some options for future development but to focus new housing on those sites already in adopted local plans and require a 25% benchmark level of affordable housing.

An alternative option (Option 2) is to only identify development sites specifically for 100% affordable housing and nothing else.

On the face of the preferred approach is more realistic as it allows for mainstream development in settlements and requires a proportion of those to be affordable. This is the traditional model and one that works elsewhere to at least deliver some affordable housing. Consideration does however have to be given to the impact that affordable housing can have on the viability of some developments, and a flexible approach should be taken to assessing developments on a case by case basis. We can see issues

in particular locations - in Cromdale, for example, where some existing local plan allocations have consents and agreed levels of affordable housing. This illustrates a core flaw in this option in specific locations i.e. that historic allocations/consents can't deal with future affordable housing requirements. It can only be future allocations and their respective planning applications that can go some way to provide the right housing to meet local housing need.

The background evidence to housing allocations is included in the MIR background report 1 - Housing and Population. This includes a lot of assumptions that can be debated at length. In summary, however, there are a couple of points worth making:

- The Aberdeenshire area of the Park does not desegregate its Housing Need and Demand Assessment information (The HNDA is prepared on behalf of Aberdeenshire Council not the CNPA) in enough detail for the Park to make any informed decisions. In stead the housing need here is based on LHA waiting lists

and average completion rates. Waiting lists are not accepted evidence of need and completion rates rely on past Local Plan land allocations and consents that could have been artificially limited. The housing information available to the CNPA therefore does not seem to offer a realistic view of housing need and demand in the Park and is most likely an under-estimate;

- The issue of holiday homes/second homes also starts to affect housing numbers. If that is the case and housing allocations only reflect the need identified in the background paper then the impacts have to be considered if a significant proportion of those are sold as holiday homes.

They are removed from the

housing supply available to local people and only a proportion of housing to meet local need can be delivered. This again points to a potential under allocation of housing sites.

In terms of identifying solutions to these issues, it may be worth considering expanding the preferred option to allocate completely new housing sites over and above existing consents and local plan allocations to deliver affordable housing. This will assist in meeting housing needs in a more flexible manner and would also remove threats to the viability of delivering open market residential developments that some affordable housing contributions may create. A more detailed study of housing need and demand in the CNP would be highly beneficial.

4. ISSUE 5- SPATIAL STRATEGY

We generally support the preferred option set out on page 44: To "Clarify the settlement hierarchy so communities are clear what they are likely to see in the future. This would include land for housing and economic investment and to clarify what is anticipated in rural communities outwith identified settlements"

The role and hierarchy of each settlement should be clearly identified in the spatial strategy and this should be followed by appropriate development allocations. In the case where sites with existing consents have not been developed for a number of years, such as Cromdale, consideration should be given to the allocation of additional sites being promoted by willing developers that can be developed through a realistic approach to phasing and delivery.

Further comments on allocations in Cromdale are contained in para 5 below.

Para 9.5 of the MIR refers to 'setting out development proposals which have permission already so we can match these with options for additional growth.' It is however also important to consider that sites with planning permission will not necessarily be developed and contribute to the required housing land supply, and alternative allocations should be considered.

The MIR reference to Option 1 that 'Provides for ad hoc development outside the settlement hierarchy to meet local need' is welcomed, and we hope that this will be delivered through LDP policies that allow for small-scale residential development opportunities in rural areas.

5. SPATIAL STRATEGY- CROMDALE

The MIR statement that 'Cromdale is a fragile community which needs housing for young and old people and business opportunities established to make the most of its sense of identity' is fully supported by our client. The principle of housing development at H 1 and H2 is also supported. The reference to existing consents for housing development has to be carefully considered, however. The 'H' site referred to

in the MIR settlement statement is still yet to be completed, and this has an influence on development taking place on the allocations suggested at H 1 and H2. It would be beneficial to alter the phasing of the allocations so that the current 'H2' site could be allocated first to allow an access to be taken directly from Kirk Road. This would allow for a more cohesive pattern of infill development linking the housing at the 'Old Station' with housing on the north side of Kirk Road. The current 'H 1' site could then become the second phase site to the rear of development fronting Kirk Road. We would also suggest that the first phase site should be increased to allow more housing to be delivered in the first phase of the LDP, to make up for the absence of completion of the 'H' site and to meet the objectives for Cromdale set out in the settlement statement. It is noted that the MIR site assessments found no issues with development on the 'H 1' and 'H2' sites and our client supports this.

6. SPATIAL STRATEGY- BALMENACH

A bid was submitted for land north of Balmenach Distillery (site ref 029b) to be allocated for around eight houses. This has not been supported as an allocation in the MIR due to concerns over scale, landscape impact and connectivity. We believe that there is scope for a housing allocation in this area and wish to respond to some of the issues raised in the MIR site

assessment. The land identified contains flexibility regarding the exact siting of housing development and this could be determined through a planning application. The scale of an eight house development is not out of character with the existing clusters of housing around the distillery buildings. There are 20 existing dwellinghouses sited around the distillery complex. The proposed development site is immediately north of the distillery complex and makes use of brownfield land to accommodate future development. The landscape impact of the development would be similar to the existing properties in the area between Cromdale and Balmenach. In terms of connectivity, the 33 Stagecoach bus service passes the site between Cromdale and Balmenach Distillery. We accordingly do not believe that there are any constraints that would preclude the allocation of housing land in this location, for the reasons outlined above, and the details contained in the original bid submission.

7. ISSUE 6- SUPPORT FOR RURAL AREAS

The preferred approach for other settlements and areas outwith the key and other settlements is to support growth that matches historic growth patterns and use the landscape character assessment to protect important rural areas from inappropriate development.

Our only comment is that some rural areas may have seen no growth over recent years. Using historic growth pattern as the main justification for future growth is unlikely to meet the aspirations of these communities or reflect what may actually be perfectly acceptable development in a particular location. The approach should allow for limited growth in appropriate locations even where, historically, there may have been none for a while.

8. 14 OTHER ISSUES | 15 SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE

The MIR also identifies other issues that it is proposed be carried forward from the last Local Plan into LDP policy and associated Supplementary Guidance. The MIR asks whether we agree that these topics should be carried forward as they are or the general direction given under these topics be revisited. For the most part these could be carried forward but it would be good practice to make them subject to review as part of the LDP to make sure that they are in line with national policy and represent realistic, deliverable policies. We previously made representations on the details of these on behalf of our client, and still have concerns over some topics, particularly Developer Contributions. We would welcome the opportunity to comment further as the LDP progresses.

Ref 35 Name Reidhaven Estate

Response

Housing development outside settlements, per Policy 22 in the adopted Local Plan is unduly restrictive and is a topic which should be revisited. It effectively prevents any new housing outside settlements except in very exceptional circumstances. The background to policy 22, however acknowledges that development of housing in the rural areas is important in supporting thriving and sustainable communities. This is a very important point which requires to be reflected in Policy 22. This approach is also reflected in Scottish Planning Policy 201 and in paragraphs 12.1 to 12.5 in the Main Issues report and perhaps in option 3 of Issue 6. A more flexible approach is needed in order to allow some housing in rural areas, subject to good design and in keeping with the character of the surrounding area.

Paragraph 8.1 of the Main Issues Report states that the plan must focus on development opportunities for the period up to 10 years from adoption - perhaps therefore up to 2023. It also

states that the plan must provide a broad indication of the scale and location of growth up to year 20 from adoption.

Paragraph 8.12 acknowledges that flexibility with sites is important to avoid a future shortfall. With this context in mind, it is clear that allocating only one site for housing in the strategic settlement of Grantown on Spey is inadequate particularly when it is acknowledged in the report that this is for short term 0-5 year housing. A developer is actively taking this site forward at present and, if approved and developed within the estimated time, will mean no further housing, be it mainstream or affordable, will be provided in the settlement for the remaining 15 years of the plan period - potentially up to 2033.

This is unacceptable as it is essential that all communities have the opportunity to grow in order to maintain prosperity and basic infrastructure. The allocation of one short term site conflicts with the Park's aim at 8.12 to maintain flexibility. The allocation of the site is subject to satisfactory surveys. If these or other constraints prevent development then the lack of any alternative allocations "effectively closes down the community for the next 20 years.

It is recommended that other sites are allocated for medium term use and to allow flexibility and in particular those areas of land adjacent to Seafield Avenue and Castle Road east which were put forward by the estate for consideration in May 2010.

Paragraph 8.12 of the Main Issues Report acknowledges that flexibility of sites is important to ensure that should any of the existing consents lapse, we face a future shortfall.

In the case of Nethybridge, two sites are allocated but it is understood that neither have consent for development due various difficulties. It would appear that Nethybridge risks being left with no further housing for the next 20 years should the two sites fail for any reason.

It is essential that all communities have the opportunity to grow in order to maintain prosperity and basic infrastructure.

The comprehensive review of appropriate levels of development referred to, requires to be brought forward to ensure that the communities needs for the next 20 years have been fully addressed. It is recommended that the sites put forward by the Estate at the former nursery on Dell Road and at Duack Bridge are reconsidered for allocation, as their scale and location are suitable to meet local needs and would allow development by local builders who have the local market and local needs in mind.

Ref 36 Name Ogivie-Grant Estate

Response

Boat of Garten - The omission of the site off Deishar Road, which was the subject of the planning application by Davall Developments and heard by the planning committee on 11th November 2011, cannot be supported. This site should be included as a suitable site for housing to support the community.

The designation of this site for development, unlike alternative sites put forward, would allow mitigation measures to be agreed between the landowner and SNH and the Park, with the potential to reduce any existing disturbance of caper by recreational users of the nearby woodland. The main outstanding difficulties with the site have been identified as the need to agree mitigation measures, which we are confident can be addressed, and design issues, which are also readily capable of being dealt with. This site therefore comes closest to being deliverable with a willing owner, a developer in place and considerable support from the community and others. It should therefore be allocated for an agreed number of houses.

Ref 37 Name Seafield Estate

Response

Boat of Garten - The Seafield Estate, in principle, supports the allocation of the site it owns, as shown south of Strathspey Park. We consider that it should be capable of accommodating more housing than the 5 units proposed in the Park's report to the Boat of Garten working group in March 2011. The site has a long standing allocation and is one which the owner supports.

Ref 38 Name Janet Trythall

Response

CNP, Local Plan, Main Issues Report, Question 4:

I DO support preferred option 2

I do NOT support preferred option 3

My reasons for supporting Option 2 are:

It will focus all new development on the provision of affordable housing by only identifying sites for 100 per cent affordable housing (bearing in mind the existing consents for "non" affordable housing).

This would have the following consequences:

- Focus new development solely on the provision of much needed affordable development.
- With limited land identified there will be little new development other than that which has permission already, limiting the amount of affordable development.
- Rely on all new development finding appropriate funding streams to ensure projects are economically viable.

I consider Option 2 has the best chance of balancing provision of affordable housing and opportunities for development while minimising adverse effects on the environment and the assets for which the CNP was designated.

Ref 39 Name Ballater Self Build Group

Response

10 Main Settlements - 10.5 Ballater - Paragraph 10.5.5

We don't think that the land allocated in the current local plan will provide opportunities for housing or meet the demand for housing need in the short term and therefore it would be appropriate to identify other land to meet the need.

We are aware that H1 has been on the cards for a long time and by all indications will still be a long time before anything starts.

Therefore it would be wise to identify other sites.

There is a need now to meet a local demand which H1 doesn't.

Ref 40 Name SNH

Response

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Main Issues Report. This is a very important step in the process of preparing the Local Development Plan for the National Park. We set out in Annex 1 to this letter our comments in line with the 28 questions asked in the paper. We set out in Annex 2 to this letter some comments on the preliminary Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA). We will be particularly keen to continue working closely with you in terms of the HRA. In line with our Casework Agreement, for the possible settlement allocations, our comments are limited to the consideration of designated nature conservation sites and species with special

protection - we have not provided comments on potential landscape and wider biodiversity impacts.

You will see from our responses in Annex 1 that we are broadly happy with the preferred approaches you have identified for the main issues. We welcome the proposal for spatial guidance where possible to assist in identifying the special qualities of the Park. We have worked closely recently with you to map wildness qualities. Maintaining and enhancing habitat connectivity for the movement of species at various scales as part of the national ecological network would be another important component of this preferred approach. Another component on which it is now possible to present spatial data is carbon-rich soils. We are mapping the distribution of carbon-rich soils in the Park in accordance with our Information Note 318 (see <http://www.snh.gov.uk/planning-and-development/advice-for-planners-and-developers/soils-rocks-and-minerals/soils-and-development/>). Please contact Patricia Bruneau to discuss this further, including obtaining digitised data under sub-licence (patricia.bruneau@snh.gov.uk). In terms of the use of resources, we feel more could have been discussed regarding small scale renewable energy developments, and appropriate policy and guidance should be included in the Proposed Plan. Under 'connectivity and communications' we would highlight the beneficial role of paths for both locals and visitors (not just core paths) and in particular circular paths associated with new housing developments can be very important to provide recreational opportunities to deflect possible disturbance to sensitive bird areas.

The MIR by its nature focuses on the 'headline' issues of key significance for future development in the Park. Another issue however which is important to include thoroughly in the Proposed Plan will be species with special protection (European Protected Species, species protected under Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended, and badgers). It is important that policy and supporting text ensures that surveys and if necessary protection plans are submitted with planning applications prior to determination, and that Planning Officers consider the relevant licensing tests should a licence be required. Further information can be found on the Planning and Licensing pages of our web site – <http://www.snh.gov.uk/planning-and-development/advice-for-planners-and-developers/protected-animals/> <http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/species-licensing/forms-and-guidance/> guidance/

Clearly a significant component of the Proposed Plan will be the allocation of land for development in the settlements of the Park. With the Local Plan only adopted last year (excepting the area of the Park within Perth and Kinross), and with a number of unimplemented large scale planning consents for housing, we agree that the LDP should take these forward in the first instance. However Boat of Garten is identified as currently lacking suitable effective land for housing. The possible sites now identified in the MIR would have a likely significant effect on European sites. We are carrying out a fuller Natura appraisal and this will be available shortly to advise you further on this matter.

Production of the LDP will allow policy matters to be covered in Supplementary Guidance (SG) that will carry the same weight as the Plan. We note the intention to produce SG on Natural Heritage, Landscape and Core Paths, and we would be very keen to work with you in due course in the preparation of these documents. These would build upon the existing equivalent non-statutory supplementary planning guidance (SPG) documents. It is presently unclear however where the present SPGs on Wildness and on Open Space would sit within the new suite of SGs, but clearly it is essential that these issues are taken forward.

Annex 2 to this response provides some comments on the Preliminary Habitats Regulations

Appraisal for the LDP. We are pleased that you have generally followed the approach as set out in the guidance prepared for SNH by David Tyldesley and Associates. However at present no cumulative assessment appears to have been carried out, either in terms of an in-combination assessment of elements of this plan, or in terms of an in-combination assessment with other plans or projects. One example of the latter will be a cumulative assessment with regard to the River Dee SAC in association with implications for water supply and water discharge being taken forward by the Aberdeen City and Shire SDP and LDP. We also note that the preliminary appropriate assessment appears at present not to include consideration of any likely significant effects on the Morrone Birkwood SAC by Braemar.

I trust you will find these comments and the more detailed comments in the annexes of assistance as you work on towards the production of the Proposed Plan. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact either Andrew Brown, Planning Adviser, Inverness office – andrew.brown@snh.gov.uk - or Debbie Greene, Operations Manager, Aviemore office – debbie.greene@snh.gov.uk -in the first instance.

ANNEX 1 CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN MAIN ISSUES REPORT

Vision

We agree that the Vision for the LDP should be drawn from current parallel work on the Park Plan. Please see our separate comments on the Draft Park Plan.

Issue 1 Special Qualities of the Park

We agree the preferred approach to indicate the special qualities spatially wherever possible, either within the Plan or in associated Supplementary Guidance. We are pleased this has been progressed for wildness and landscape character, and through preparation of the landscape framework. Other key areas for spatial identification as well as those identified on Map 1b we suggest include –

- green networks/habitat connectivity; linked to the maintenance of an integrated habitat network which will form part of the national ecological network (NPF2, para 96)

- carbon rich soils – see information on our web site at <http://www.snh.gov.uk/planning-and-development/advice-for-planners-anddevelopers/soils-rocks-and-minerals/soils-and-development/>

We are working at present on mapping of the distribution of carbon-rich soils in the Park and will be pleased to work with you on this for both the LDP and the Park Plan - please contact Dr Patricia Bruneau, Edinburgh office to discuss this further – patricia.bruneau@snh.gov.uk

- geodiversity – see information on our web site at <http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/safeguarding-geodiversity/>

Spatial information on special qualities will need to be at a scale and resolution that is meaningful to users of the plan and their individual proposals. Conversely care will need to be taken that the level of detail shown does not overestimate the accuracy of the data that has been used. It is suggested that a guide as to what scale spatial maps should be used and will be relevant would aid this.

Issue 2 Resources

We agree the preferred approach of a combination of spatial guidance and criteria based policy to indicate opportunities and sensitivities for resource management. Different methods of policy coverage are likely to be possible for different resources. For example some special qualities of the Park are difficult to spatially map (e.g. visual and sensory qualities), but should nevertheless be given full consideration in assessing the potential for sustainable resource use.

We support the statement in para 6.6 that water is a key natural resource which should be both protected and enhanced. Water quality and quantity are both important. Development which could affect water quality and quantity is particularly important to several Special Areas of Conservation, such as the River Spey, River Dee, and River Tay. Virtually all of the Park falls within the catchment of a river SAC, which reinforces the need for best practice catchment management. This would presumably be covered in more detail by the proposed Supplementary Guidance on Water Resources. The cumulative impact of proposed development on the river SACs should be considered as part of the Habitats Regulations Appraisal, both in terms of this plan and in combination with other plans or projects.

Renewable energy is not considered in much detail in this section of the report. In terms of the current policy approach in the Local Plan, it would be helpful to specify what is meant by 'small scale' in relation to renewable energy schemes, including wind farms. You will be aware that there are a number of projects being developed for micro hydro-electricity generation in the Park, two proposed wind farms (each 3 turbines) in Strathspey, and at least one photovoltaic project. The LDP should reflect this more diverse demand, perhaps in Supplementary Guidance on small scale renewable energy development.

This section of the Plan should also consider minerals, peat, forestry and woodlands. Linking policy to an ecosystems approach would assist in recognising the multiple benefits from the Parks' resources, e.g. woodlands and peatlands as carbon stores, and flood plain areas for water management.

Issue 3 Support for our communities

We agree the preferred approach of more community-specific policy to support economic development opportunities in the Park, according to the capacity for growth. A key area for consideration here will be sustainable tourism, based on the Sustainable Tourism Strategy.

Issue 4 Housing/Affordable Housing

We have no comment on the various options, although the location of affordable housing ideally should not be considered in isolation from other key requirements such as affordable transport, employment opportunities and services. This more integrated assessment may give more scope for options and the working-up of proposals in a more holistic way.

Issue 5 Spatial Strategy

We agree the preferred option to continue with the approach of the current Local Plan. We note that settlement boundaries are not shown in the MIR – only site allocations – and assume these will be included in the Proposed Plan.

We suggest that it is helpful to put as much information on the locations of constraints into the public domain as possible, so that everyone, including developers and neighbours, can see the issues with any particular site. Such information would be useful after the LDP is adopted if sites not allocated are nevertheless pursued.

There is a slight anomaly in that the Speyside Way is mentioned in the context of Cromdale (para 11.9.1) but it also passes or goes through Grantown-on-Spey, Nethy Bridge, Boat of Garten, Tomintoul, Aviemore - and potentially in the future Kinraig, Kingussie and Newtonmore. See further comments in Annex 2 re the Habitats Regulations Appraisal of the spatial strategy.

Question 6 – An Camas Mor

We note the proposed allocation and phasing for this new settlement, reflecting the current Local Plan and the current planning application. Natural heritage issues should be taken forward through the masterplanning for this area, including Habitats Regulations Appraisal. The LDP

should include any pedestrian/cycle link bridge to Aviemore, which should be assessed as part of the HRA.

There is a need for a good network of suitable paths to be built into the development as this area isn't well covered by the current core paths plan. Good local path networks could also be beneficial to avoid increases in people walking dogs and disturbing capercaillie in the nearby Cairngorms and Abernethy Forest SPAs.

Question 7 Aviemore

We note that the proposed new Tesco site is not identified. The site is adjacent to the Aviemore Burn, which flows into the River Spey SAC, and therefore any residual effects should be included as part of the in-combination assessment within the Habitats Regulations Appraisal of the plan.

Question 8 Ballater

The Habitats Regulations Appraisal of the plan should assess implications of development of this site on the River Dee SAC in terms of water supply and waste water discharge. This assessment should include an in-combination appraisal, both with other proposals in this Plan and with other proposals in the Aberdeenshire & Aberdeen City LDP/SDP.

Question 9 Grantown-on-Spey

We are aware that the Strathspey Railway is aiming to extend the railway line to Grantown-on-Spey, and we would query if one or more of the proposed sites for a railway station should be included in the proposed allocations.

Question 10 Kingussie

No comments (site proposed for allocation has planning permission). If there are any residual effects, the site should be included as part of the in-combination assessment of the likelihood of significant effects of the plan as part of the Habitats Regulations Appraisal.

Question 11 Newtonmore

No comments (sites proposed for allocation either have planning permission or are already allocated in the Local Plan). Sites should be included (unless no residual effects) alone and in combination as part of the Habitats Regulations Appraisal.

Question 12 Blair Atholl

Option 2 (retaining the sites in the current Local Plan) would raise far more issues in terms of the Habitats Regulations Appraisal of the plan. These two sites are adjacent to the River Tay SAC. Further discussions with us should take place in the context of the HRA should all or part of these sites be taken forward towards the Proposed Plan.

Option 1 (a new allocation to the SE of the village) raises landscape issues for the Park Authority to consider and mitigate. It is adjacent to the Blair Atholl Meadow SSSI, and this proximity should be recorded as a development factor in terms of ensuring avoidance of any adverse impacts on this SSSI.

Question 13 Boat of Garten

The potential allocations for housing could all have an impact on capercaillie, through recreational use in the Boat of Garten Wood from people in the new developments. We advise that there is a likely significant effect on capercaillie in Abernethy, Kinveachy Forest, Cairngorms and Craigmore Wood SPAs, and will provide an appraisal of this issue as soon as practical to inform the Habitats Regulations Appraisal of the plan.

Question 14 Braemar

The proposed longer term site to the SW of the village is adjacent to the Morrone Birkwood SAC/SSSI. It should therefore be assessed as part of the Habitats Regulations Appraisal of the plan. The potential issue here would be if it was proposed to abstract water from the site to supply the houses. Features the site is identified for include subalpine flushes, springhead, rill and flush (both SSSI) and hardwater springs depositing lime, base rich fens and high altitude plant communities associated with areas of water seepage. There are already a number of water supplies sourced from the site and if it was proposed to use springs to supply water to any new development it might be an issue for these interests. The water supply for this site should therefore be clarified – if instead it would be from the River Dee this too would need assessing (alone and in combination) as part of the HRA for the River Dee SAC (see comment under Ballater).

This proposed site on the boundary of Morrone also includes the car park for the National Nature Reserve. We would wish to see some kind of parking provision retained for the site, and this should be included within the development factors and developer requirements for this area, should it be taken forward.

Question 15 Bruar and Pitagowan

This proposed site (brought forward from the existing Local Plan) should be included within the assessment (alone and in combination) of proposals in the plan on the River Tay SAC as part of the Habitats Regulations Appraisal.

Question 16 Carrbridge

These proposed sites (either with unimplemented planning permission – unless these have no residual effects - or carried forward from the existing Local Plan) should be included within the assessment (alone and in combination) of proposals in the plan on the River Spey SAC as part of the Habitats Regulations Appraisal.

Question 17 Cromdale

The possible sites for the medium and long term should be included within the assessment (alone and in combination) of proposals in the plan on the River Spey SAC as part of the Habitats Regulations Appraisal. The short term site – with planning permission – should be included in the in-combination assessment unless this would have no residual effects.

Question 18 Dalwhinnie

These sites (either with unimplemented planning permission – unless these have no residual effects - or carried forward from the existing Local Plan) should be included within the assessment (alone and in combination) of proposals in the plan on the River Spey SAC as part of the Habitats Regulations Appraisal.

Question 19 Dinnet

Housing sites –

The proposed housing sites, at their closest, lie within 50m of the River Dee SAC, notified for Otter, Atlantic Salmon and Freshwater Pearl Mussel. Otters are also European Protected Species (EPS). As part of the Habitats Regulations Appraisal of the plan, any development here must therefore ensure that there will be no loss of habitat or disturbance to Otter or adverse effect upon the Atlantic Salmon and Freshwater Pearl Mussel through impacts upon water quality, both alone and in combination with other plans or projects (see comment under Ballater).

Employment Sites –

1. The Clarack

This proposed site is for the conversion of the steading to commercial/retail. The north-west

corner of this site appears to lie within the Muir of Dinnet SSSI. Without more detailed information regarding what is proposed for this area, we cannot advise if this is likely to affect the special interest of the SSSI. For example while formation of hard infrastructure such as new buildings or car parking may affect the special interest, open space associated with the setting of any steading conversion with appropriate management may not. Our preference would be that the boundary of this area is amended to exclude the SSSI area. Otherwise more information will be required to demonstrate how any adverse effects on the SSSI will be avoided.

The site also lies close to the Clarack Loch which forms part of the River Dee SAC. Otters have been recorded from the area. Otters are both a feature of the SAC and a European Protected Species. We advise that any development would therefore require an otter survey particularly for holts or resting places and if necessary appropriate mitigation.

The site should be included within the Habitats Regulations Appraisal of the plan in terms of the River Dee SAC, both alone and in combination with other plans or projects. The site also lies close to an entry point to the Muir of Dinnet National Nature Reserve (NNR). It is possible that any development at Clarack would become a significant entry point to the reserve. However we are promoting the Burn O' Vat area as the main gateway to the NNR. Should this site be taken forward into the Proposed Plan, it would be important that a developer requirement should be included to ensure close working with SNH in order to

manage the potential increase in people accessing the reserve from Clarack, and to ensure that relevant information on the reserve is made available to visitors. We have previously provided advice to you and the owners on development of visitor facilities in this area. We therefore advise that as a part of the development requirements here a visitor management plan should be drawn up preferably to accompany any planning application.

2. Chalet and Caravan Site

This proposed site is for the formation of a Chalet/Caravan Site. The habitat survey on page 374 of the appendix to the evidence describes the site as mature even-aged pine plantation over a typical ground layer of heath and mosses. The birch component increases to the north.

The northern part of the proposed site is very close to the area to the south of Clarack Loch which is within the River Dee SAC notified for Otter, Atlantic Salmon and Freshwater Pearl Mussel. Otters are also European Protected Species (EPS). Should this proposal be taken forward into the Proposed Plan, we therefore advise that:

- the northern boundary is amended if necessary to exclude the SAC;
 - any development would require an otter survey particularly for holts or resting places and if necessary appropriate mitigation;
 - any development must ensure that there will be no adverse effect upon Atlantic Salmon and Freshwater Pearl Mussel through impacts upon water quality. The site should be included within the Habitats Regulations Appraisal of the plan in terms of the River Dee SAC, both alone and in combination with other plans or projects
- Red squirrels have been recorded in the area. Red squirrels and their dreys are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). We therefore advise that any development should require a red squirrel survey to accompany a planning application, since this may affect how or whether the development can take place.

As a development of this type is likely to result in an increase in visitor numbers which could potentially affect the species of the SAC and the nearby Muir of Dinnet SSSI, we also advise that as a part of the development requirements a visitor management plan is drawn up preferably to accompany any planning application.

Question 20 Dulnain Bridge

These proposed sites (either with unimplemented planning permission – unless this has no residual effect - or carried forward from the existing Local Plan) should be included within the assessment (alone and in combination) of proposals in the plan on the River Spey SAC as part

of the Habitats Regulations Appraisal.

Question 21 Killiecrankie

These proposed sites (carried forward from the existing Local Plan 2000) should be included within the assessment (alone and in combination) of proposals in the plan on the River Tay SAC as part of the Habitats Regulations Appraisal.

Question 22 Kincaig

These proposed sites (carried forward from the existing Local Plan) should be included within the assessment (alone and in combination) of proposals in the plan on the River Spey SAC as part of the Habitats Regulations Appraisal.

Question 23 Nethy Bridge

These proposed sites (with unimplemented planning consents – unless these have no residual effects) should be included within the in-combination assessment of proposals in the plan on the River Spey SAC and the various SPAs relating to capercaillie as part of the Habitats Regulations Appraisal.

Question 24 Tomintoul

These proposed sites (with unimplemented planning consents – unless these have no residual effects, or carried forward from the existing Local Plan, or new additional longer term allocations) should be included within the assessment (alone and in combination) of proposals in the plan on the River Spey SAC as part of the Habitats Regulations Appraisal.

Issue 6 Support for our rural areas

We agree that Option 1 (very ad hoc) and Option 2 (very restrictive) have strong disadvantages. We therefore agree a more proactive option along the lines of Option 3 is preferable. We wonder if this might involve the production of 'Settlement Development Area' boundaries for the smaller settlements where specific allocations are not considered necessary (e.g. Laggan, Insh, Inverdrue, Skye of Curr, Balmoral and Strathdon). This could be informed by landscape capacity analysis.

This could be complemented by the production of siting and design guidance that took account of the different nature of small settlements in the Cairngorms, e.g. crofting, estate, linear v. concentrated.

Issue 7 Connectivity and Communications

We welcome the preference to link future development to travel facilities that would enable access to work, services, open space etc without the use of a private car. Development should support public transport where this is available. The preferred option also would seek contributions from developers towards existing and new routes, and this should include paths for walking and cycling. In terms of paths, taking forward this preferred approach should not be limited to core paths, but should look to develop a strategic path network more generally. Path provision (e.g. loop walks) is especially important in locations where unfocussed public access may cause adverse impacts on natural heritage interests (especially dog walking). The LDP should play an important role in securing that this is provided where necessary before housing is occupied.

Paths are also very important for recreation for visitors as well as local residents, so providing spin-off local economic benefits. As part of this the LDP could include the Speyside Way and proposed extension as an important strategic route, subject to the final route being determined in time.

Depending on the current review of the General Permitted Development Order, the LDP should

include consideration of hill tracks, e.g. locations of special sensitivity outwith NSAs, Natura sites and SSSIs, and expected standards of construction.

However 'connectivity and communications' should not be limited to physical components and helping people to move around the Park. Also vital are telecommunications links such as high-speed broadband connectivity and increased coverage of the mobile phone network.

These are key to delivering many of the other issues (e.g. local business opportunities) and as such should be highlighted and encouraged.

Other Issues

A change since the Local Plan relating to the natural heritage is that we now have the licensing function in respect of European Protected Species and protected species under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The possible need for a licence as well as a planning consent is relevant for example to the section of the plan dealing with the conversion and reuse of existing traditional and vernacular buildings. We have produced guidance on how planners and developers can consider the relevant tests for a licence. Please see our website at –

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/species-licensing/forms-andguidance/guidance/>

Supplementary Guidance

We welcome the proposal for Supplementary Guidance (SG) on Natural Heritage. This can build on the current supplementary planning guidance, but we would highlight the following with regard to the current SPG on Natural Heritage –

As you will know, the licensing system for work which could affect bats is now administered by ourselves. We suggest adding a link to our website for further information on the topic. The website address is:

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/species-licensing/mammal-licensing/batsand-licensing/>

Section 7.4 Other priority species - the first bullet point, last sentence, could include ancient and long-established semi-natural woodland. It would be useful to identify ancient woodland as a priority habitat.

Section 7.10 Biosecurity - this section does not mention North American signal crayfish (NASC). It might be worth adding them to the first bullet point, or mention animals, since they are neither a plant nor a parasite. Raising the profile of NASC would be helpful, although we acknowledge that this is less likely to be a planning issue than species such as Japanese knotweed.

Annex 3, page 12, 1st paragraph underneath the table - Insh Marshes is given as an example of overlapping designations, and the designations are listed. To help make the point, Insh Marshes is also designated as a Ramsar site.

We welcome the intention for SG for Landscape, but query whether this could not be amalgamated into the Natural Heritage SG. It is for example unclear whether the present SPGs on Wildness and Open Space would feature within the proposed SGs on Natural Heritage or Landscape. Green Networks/Habitat Connectivity should feature within the Natural Heritage SG. We suggest SG is required for small scale renewable energy developments, although perhaps it is the intention that this should be included in the proposed 'Use of Resources' SG?

We welcome the proposed Sustainable Design SG, which could include siting and design guidance for housing developments outwith the key settlements, and also guidance on hill tracks. With regard to the existing Sustainable Design Guide we would comment as follows:

Section 3, page 43, Sustainable design statement and checklist - under the natural heritage section, there is no mention that a species licence might be required for work which might affect a bat roost.

Section 4.3, page 56 - the final section on planning permission does not mention species

licensing for work which might affect a bat roost. As bats are a European Protected Species, it is good practice that a planning application should be accompanied by a Species Protection Plan which explains how the work could affect the species, and what works are proposed to address the issue. This would help the planning authority to consider whether planning permission should be granted for works which might affect an EPS.

We note that there is currently no sustainable design guidance for landscape. We look forward to working with you on this in due course. One aspect that could be covered in either a sustainable design guide or in the LDP would be the identification and protection of iconic views. There are a number of views which are 'classic' Cairngorms views. These could be identified, and specifically protected from inappropriate development.

One area that it would be very helpful to clarify is hill tracks. The Local Authorities and ourselves recently received e-mail guidance from you on when hill tracks in the Park should be considered as development. It would be beneficial to build this into a sustainable design guide on hill tracks. This could cover when a track needs planning permission, design of track, scale, length, landscape impact and habitat impact. This will be subject to the current GPDO review concerning hill tracks.

It is unclear where the current SPG on the Conversion and Reuse of Existing Traditional and Vernacular Buildings will fit within the new proposed SG – will it form part of the Sustainable Design SG? We would comment on the existing SPG on traditional and vernacular buildings as follows –

Section 7.1, fourth bullet point - we suggest removing the reference to squirrels, which are not usually an issue for buildings in our experience, and replacing it with 'nesting birds'. It would help the public and developers if the new species licensing system were to be summarised in a paragraph in this section. In particular, information to assist the public to submit licence applications would be helpful. This is particularly relevant to this guidance.

See comment above re guidance on our web site on certain licensing tests.

Section 8. Further guidance - as bats and licensing are also an issue for buildings, we suggest adding the link to our website to this section:

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/species-licensing/mammal-licensing/batsand-licensing/>

ANNEX 2

COMMENTS ON PRELIMINARY HABITATS REGULATIONS APPRAISAL (HRA)

This is a preliminary HRA to inform more detailed HRA work as the Proposed Plan is prepared, and to ensure that no 'unreasonable' options in terms of impacts on European sites is taken forward.

Page 4 - Tulach Hill and Glen Fender Meadows SAC is within the Park boundary and also adjacent in parts – so should be included in the HRA.

Page 13 – wind farms are recognised as an issue for Cairngorms SPA but not for Cairngorms Massif SPA. They could be an issue for both, as golden eagles are a feature for the Cairngorm Massif SPA.

Page 26 – for Morrone Birkwood SAC the settlement of Braemar should be specified Page 30 - River South Esk SAC - vulnerabilities: add river engineering such as regrading, engineering works, dredging etc.

SNH guidance to planning applicants for the River South Esk SAC, and also for River Tay SAC provide comprehensive guidance on the interests, potential impacts and further information which may be required. See – <http://www.snh.gov.uk/publications-data-and-research/publications/search-thecatalogue/publication-detail/?id=1749>

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/publications-data-and-research/publications/search-thecatalogue/publication-detail/?id=1750>

Page 32 – for River Spey SAC Tomintoul should be added to the list of 'relevant settlements'

Page 33 – for River Tay SAC Killiecrankie and Bruar/Pitagowan should be added to the list of ‘relevant settlements’; also re vulnerabilities: as for River South Esk SAC above, and also add sediment release.

Page 34 - although only of academic consequence now, it would have been more thorough if each of the options under each of the issues was screened, rather than simply the issue itself. Thus for example Issue 7 (connectivity and communications) has two options, and it could be argued that Option 2 – which will show areas of pressure and opportunity, and target developer contributions towards these areas – has greater potential towards having a likely significant effects on European sites compared to Option 1 – which is less spatial in its policy approach. Also the options under Issue 1 (special qualities) could have been screened out by reason of being protective in nature, rather than being too general.

Page 35 – Other settlements to add are Tomintoul (River Spey SAC), Killiecrankie (River Tay SAC) and Bruar/Pitagowan (River Tay SAC).

Another Natura sites to add is Morrone Birkwood SAC (Braemar)

Pages 35-36 – add Bruar/Pitagowan, Killiecrankie and Tomintoul to lists

Page 36 –

Blair Atholl – sites should be listed and assessed individually, especially as sites H26 and H28 are adjacent to the SAC

Boat of Garten, Braemar, Cromdale, Dinnet and Dulnain Bridge – again it will be important to assess sites individually in view of potential greater sensitivity of certain sites to Natura sites e.g. Braemar re Morrone Birkwood SAC

Dalwhinnie – add ED site

Nethy Bridge – unsure of inclusion in this table as no sites appear to be proposed here other than those with planning permission already (but see below)

Although possible settlement allocations are screened out which have planning permission already, if any of these have any residual likely effects on European sites, they should be reconsidered as part of a cumulative ‘in-combination’ assessment with other allocations in the plan to identify any cumulative likely significant effects.

For each of the European sites, possible in-combination effects should be considered, as well as possible effects from individual settlements/allocations.

Possible likely significant effects of the proposals in this plan in combination with proposals in other plans, and other projects, should also be considered and assessed. The most pertinent plans are likely to be those that cover downstream sections of the key rivers – Dee, Tay and Spey - e.g. Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire LDP and SDP, and TAYPlan. There is for example an opportunity to work with the Aberdeen City and Shire SDPA to consider cumulative impacts as a result of abstraction of water from the River Dee for housing developments on the qualifying features in terms of water flows.

Preliminary appropriate assessment – policy caveats should be applied to draft proposals in the Proposed Plan where mitigation is identified that is required in order to avoid any adverse effect on the integrity of a European site.

Page 37 – Abernethy Forest, Cairngorms, Craigmore Wood and Kinveachy Forest SPAs re Boat of Garten housing – we will provide further advice on this issue once we have completed a Natura appraisal.

Page 43 – Morrone Birkwood SAC re Braemar has been omitted from this preliminary Appropriate Assessment and should be included in further AA work

Page 46 – River Dee SAC re Dinnet – requirement for an otter survey should be added in respect of sites shown in the MIR

Page 53 – River Spey SAC – add Tomintoul

Page 54 – River Tay SAC – add Killiecrankie and Bruar/Pitagowan

Ref 41 Name Robert Moss

Response

8 Issue 4 – Housing/Affordable Housing - Paragraph 8.15

Option 2 is preferable because the prime aim of the Park is to preserve the natural heritage, not to act as a development area for second homes. Action should be taken to prevent second homes in or near the Park and to ensure that only affordable homes for people who genuinely work in the Park are built. I am of course aware that, in its current guise, the CNPA was set up with the aim of increasing development in the Park. Here's to a Cairngorms Spring.

Ref 42 Name Jane O`Donovan

Response

I refer to Question 4 in the Main issues Report

I do not support Option 3

I support Option 2 - see below

I refer to Question 4 in the main issues report. I do not support Option 3.

I am of the opinion that all future housing within the National Park should be available as affordable. I therefore prefer Option 2.

The present acceptance of between 25%/40% of affordable is clearly not working therefore Option 2 has to be the future for those living and working within the Park.

There is already a high percentage of luxury/holiday accommodation within the park which has been built within the last decade and is still being built.

All new build houses should have a residency criteria creating a more sustainable stable population. Retirees need not be excluded from this criteria as this group are apt to create more jobs locally.

Ref 43 Name The Highland Council

Response

Main Issues Report - Comments from Housing and Property Services:

Joint working

We are keen to build on and further develop joint and partnership working via mechanisms such as the Cairngorm Housing Delivery Group and also on a more focused and local level.

Given the current economic climate and constrained resources, which may result in fewer allocated housing sites coming forward for development as hoped and anticipated, it will be important that any challenges to the smooth development of housing sites, which are coming forward, are managed as quickly and straightforwardly as possible.

We will continue to organise regular meetings with those with key role in enabling housing development. As well discussing affordable housing investment planning for the Badenoch and Strathspey area, these will focus on taking forward individual housing sites. We would hope that CNPA officers will continue to play a key role in these meeting which would help to ensure that any issues (e.g. arising from environmental concerns) are identified early and issues resolved.

Recognise that enabling a balance between environmental concerns and meeting the needs of communities is challenging. As CNPA will be aware, the successful delivery of affordable housing development relies on early decision making by all partners including the CNPA. The Council keen to build on the recent positive experience of delivering housing in the CNPA in Manse Road, Kingussie.

In support of preferred approaches re. housing and communities (i.e. Issue 3, Supporting Our Communities; Issue 4, Affordable Housing; Issues 5, Spatial Strategy) and agree with the justifications for the preferred options.

Would like to emphasise that Highland's Housing Need & Demand Assessment (HNDA) demonstrated that the majority of housing required to meet housing need in the B&S area of the CNP is social rented housing. And, as agreed with the CNPA, Highland's Local Housing Strategy set its affordable housing target and investment priorities to ensure that the most appropriate type of housing built where most needed. LDP and related policies should enable the affordable housing target and agreed priorities to be met.

Local Housing Strategy also sets out approach, agreed with CNPA, to ensure that low cost home ownership housing is targeted to ensure that it helps to meet communities' needs. Keen to work with CNPA to ensure that this approach is delivered.

Want to work with CNPA to deliver the agreed Local Housing Strategy including via the LDP and planning processes. Particularly keen to work with the CNPA to ensure that the housing system (i.e. encompassing all housing tenures) is better able to meet communities needs.

Unfortunate that CNPA Affordable Housing Policy will be revised to 25% benchmark given the extent of demonstrated housing need in the Badenoch and Strathspey housing market area alongside the land supply and deliverability challenges. Nonetheless recognise their reasons for making this policy change across the whole CNPA particularly the current economic context. Keen to work the CNPA to monitor and assess the impact of the Affordable Housing Policy.

Questions on Settlements

Agree with preferred options for communities in Badenoch & Strathspey housing market area except for Grantown, Boat of Garten and Carr-Bridge.

As CNPA aware, the Housing Strategy and the associated Strategic Housing Investment Plan sets out the Council's agreed priorities for affordable housing investment in the Badenoch & Strathspey housing market area. Supporting the delivery of affordable housing in the Aviemore area (including An Camus More) is one of the highest priorities.

Question 9 - Grantown

We feel that there may be challenges to delivering housing with the preferred option. Given our experience of land and sites issues in Grantown, we feel that it may not be possible to deliver the identified housing land. Moreover we have concerns that longer term sites have not been identified as they have been in other communities in the Park. Given the extent of the need for affordable housing, the lack of any significant affordable housing development in the last 10 years and the site issues, we feel that there is a need for more options for housing land to be identified (ideally encompassing a number of different owners) and for the (currently tight) settlement boundary to expanded to enable this.

Question 13 – Boat of Garten

We feel that there may be challenges to delivering housing with the preferred option. Given our experience of trying to deliver affordable housing in the village we are aware that the identified sites have significant constraints on their development. We feel that there is for additional sites to be identified if the constraints continue to be insurmountable. We also feel that there would be value in supporting a mix of sites from different landowners.

Question 16 – Carr-Bridge

Given our experiences with trying to facilitate housing development in Carr- Bridge, we have concerns that the identified site may not be deliverable given the on-going constraints and challenges which have yet to be resolved. We feel that there would be value therefore in working to identify additional options for housing development.

Supplementary Guidance

We note that the CNPA developer contributions capture even small developments. This approach is unlikely to tie in exactly with the Council's approach, therefore we expect there to be two different values on developer contributions – one inside the park area and in the other parts of Highland.

Housing suitable for older and disabled people

Given the projected growth in older and disabled people in B&S as demonstrated in the Highland Housing Need and Demand Assessment, the policy commitments to helping people to live independently at home and the limited availability of land suitable for development which is centrally located and close to services and relevant facilities, we feel there is a role for the planning authority to facilitate the development of housing suitable for older and disabled people. Through, for example, identifying housing sites that are particularly suitable for older people and people with disabilities and encouraging them to be brought forward for this use. On such sites, we feel that it would be appropriate that the density and housing mix reflects the needs of older people and people with disabilities.

If developments aimed at for specifically for older and disabled people are being proposed (such as care homes or housing with care developments) we feel there is a need for consultation with appropriate partners including the Council's Social Work Service and NHS Highland to ensure.

We are currently arranging a meeting with key partners from the Council and CNPA to discuss the land supply issues in more depth as well as options for affordable housing development and meeting the housing needs of older and disabled people in communities etc.

Report by Director of Planning & Development

Members are advised that the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan Main Issues Report and the Draft National Park Plan 2012 - 2017 have been published for consultation. This report advises Members of the main themes in the Main Issues Report and Draft National Park Plan and will be forwarded to the Cairngorms National Park Authority as part of the Council's feedback. □

Background

1.1 The Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) has started work to replace the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan 2010. As part of this work CNPA has published the Main Issues Report (MIR) for the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan; this is the first formal stage in preparing a Local Development Plan (LDP). CNPA has asked for submissions by 9 December 2011. The draft Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012-2017 has also been published for consultation with a deadline for submissions by 9 December 2011.

1.2 The MIR does not cover all policy topics that will be in the LDP. The full details of these will be available when the LDP – Proposed Plan is published in 2012. However, the MIR does cover key aspects on which CNPA is seeking comments early in the plan-making process.

1.3 The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan was only recently adopted in October 2010 and covers a similar period in its vision to that of the forthcoming LDP, so this has had an influence on the MIR regarding the scope of policy alternatives put forward for the LDP.

1.4 For information, the Council is currently in discussion with the CNPA and Scottish Government about the anticipated continuing role of the Highland Structure Plan as part of the Development Plan within the Park for the period between adoption of the Highland wide LDP and adoption of the Cairngorms National Park LDP.

1.5 The feedback contained within this report is from the point of view of The Highland Council as a neighbouring Development Planning Authority and is not intended to present the views of all interested Highland Council services.

Main Issues Report

2.1 The Local Development Plan is to be guided by the strategic direction and vision provided in the draft National Park Plan and will help to deliver its 5 year outcomes. The Main Issues Report contains 7 main issues:

Special qualities of the Park

Resources/reducing our consumption

Supporting our communities

Housing/affordable housing

Spatial strategy

Support for rural areas

Connectivity and communications

2.2 In Issue 1, wildness is a special quality that it is proposed to conserve and enhance and there is a map which shows the different levels of wildness in the National Park. This is of interest to the Council particularly in the area of its plan boundary with The National Park, especially in terms of renewable energy developments. The CNPA has previously consulted on the wildness issue as part of its Wildness Supplementary Planning Guidance (see report to Planning, Environment and Development Committee 25 May 2011) and therefore this part of the MIR is a step on from that in terms of considering incorporating relevant policy within the LDP as a context for the guidance. It should be noted that the Council has received representations on its Draft Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance in respect of the need to include wildness (or wild land) considerations and also in respect of its proposed policy approach relating to windfarms which may impact on the setting of the Park. The CNPA will be consulted further on these issues of common interest as the Guidance is taken forward and further developed. This should enable CNPA to take into account The Highland Council's policy and guidance when developing the LDP for the Park, ensuring complementary documents, recognising the challenges of meeting the Scottish Government's renewable energy targets.

2.3 In respect of issue 2 "Resources/reducing our consumption", it is understood that the CNPA have been undertaking an options appraisal for renewable energy in the Park and the Council awaits the publication of that with interest. There is likely to be opportunity to tie in with use of the Council's Highland Heat Map and officers of the Council and CNPA have had a preliminary

discussion about this.

2.4 Issue 4 is suggesting a change in the contribution of affordable housing from the existing contribution of 25 – 40% of new housing development to be affordable, to one in line with the national benchmark of 25%, ensuring all main and other settlements have some options for future development. The Park Authority states that this will still provide more affordable housing units that it is shown to be needed, but there will be the additional flexibility of having allocations for development of all forms of housing in all the main and other settlements in the Park. The Council's Housing and Property Service is preparing a response to the consultations.

2.5 Issue 5 retains a settlement hierarchy that reinforces the existing pattern of settlement with Aviemore, Ballater, Grantown-on-Spey, Kingussie, Newtonmore and (in the longer term) An Camas Mòr as the main settlements. In light of existing consents, no reasonable alternatives to the current approach are set out in the MIR.

2.6 It is recognised in the MIR that the Park does not sit in isolation and is an integral part of its surrounding areas and that Inverness is influential on communities within the Park.

2.7 There are also a number of other policy areas and approaches outwith the 7 issues in the MIR, that it is proposed are just taken forward from the current adopted Local Plan into the Proposed Local Development Plan or the Supplementary Guidance associated with it. These include: cultural heritage; developer contributions; design; development standards; house extensions and alterations; replacement houses; conversion and reuse of existing traditional and vernacular buildings; gypsies and travellers and travelling show people; and tourism related development.

Recommendation

This report is for noting by Members and will be sent to the Cairngorms National Park Authority as part of the Council's feedback by 9 December 2011.

Ref 44 Name North East Mountain Trust

Response

General

- 1) The majority of the document deals with developments within the Park, and we suggest that more emphasis should be given to conservation issues (especially but not only within the "Special Qualities" section) in order to produce a more balanced document.
- 2) We are surprised that Cairngorm Mountain itself is not identified and analysed as a Main Issue. It is the icon of the Park and it is what most Scottish people think of when the National Park is mentioned. It has a chequered development history with the hugely controversial funicular railway development, and the company is now looking to diversify into summer activities. Any further development of the mountain needs to be treated very carefully and is likely to cause significant controversy. Given the likelihood that trends and fluctuations, both financial and climatic, are likely to trigger further proposals, the Park Authority should have a clear strategy for the way forward.
- 3) We note that there is a significant move towards providing additional spatial guidance (in the form of maps of special qualities, particularly wildness) within the Main Issues Report. It is something that we have long argued for and think that it is to be welcomed. It will be important to make sure that this spatial guidance is focused on protecting the core areas of the Park rather than simply giving carte blanche to any development in the periphery.

4) There is heavy focus on more housing, which is undoubtedly a “main issue” for the Park. While we fully support the idea of more affordable housing for Park residents who will provide essential services, we cannot believe that a massive increase in housing for the retirement, second-home and holiday-let markets is the best way to achieve this. The Park should not put itself in the position of acquiescing in high effective economic demand for more housing to be constructed for the wealthier and more mobile sections of the national and international community; not only is this likely to damage the quality of the Park, but the more successful the Park, the higher such demand (as opposed to “need”) is likely to be. A ratio of three full-price houses to one affordable house is poor and certainly not best practice. We suggest that the proposed increase in full-price housing be drastically curtailed. The document refers to the National Benchmark for affordable housing, which we believe is inappropriate. Given the special qualities of the Park, a much greater proportion of affordable housing within any allowed new housing development is required, and a much reduced supply of new full-price housing.

Specific Issues

- 1) Special Qualities of the Park - We support the preferred approach.
- 2) Resources/Reducing our Consumption – We support the preferred approach.
- 3) Support for our Communities - We support the preferred approach.
- 4) We consider the benchmark of 25% affordable housing to be inappropriate and hence prefer Option 2 (100% affordable housing)
- 5) Spatial Strategy – We support the preferred option but are not happy about the strong presumption that more development is all that matters
- 6) An Camas Mor is fundamentally wrong in concept. The Park does not need a large-scale new town in such a prominent and central location. This might be appropriate for the development of an area of lesser conservation importance outside the Park and with already good transport connections (to limit further traffic). Development of the existing centres, to improve services and Park-friendly “ambience”, is one thing; building a whole new urban area within the Park is another. If more emphasis was placed on needed affordable housing and less on full-price housing wanted only as “positional goods” by the relatively wealthy and economically inactive, there would no need for An Camas Mor.
- 7-24) We have no specific comments on the proposed infill development of the existing settlements. In general, we support the early stage proposals and are against the later more radical developments, which in our view cater to the second home and holiday lets markets. See our comments above on the ratio of affordable houses to full-price houses.
- 25) Support for Rural Areas – We believe that the preferred option is too loose and open to abuse and hence we prefer Option 2. We agree that Landscape Character Assessment is a good tool for this situation, and when used wisely would give an appropriate answer. However, such assessment is controversial (would a landscape gain or lose in character if new buildings were to replace current ruins?), and it is too easily manipulated so that we could end up with, e.g. single new buildings in rural areas. Restricted development as in Option 2 would allow the addition of a house to say 5 existing houses or a building to support a small local rural business.
- 26) Connectivity and Communications – We find this too general to be of any use. A footpath/cycleway from Dulnain Bridge to Grantown is a good idea and would be fully supported. However, improving the road network, with or without developer contributions, will simply generate additional traffic with consequent additional emissions, etc. We do not support improving the road network, except for dualling the whole of the A9 through-route.
- 27) Other Issues – We agree that the listed issues also need to be considered. We are concerned about Developer Contributions and see this as a slippery slope leading to An Camas Mor proposals. Developer Contributions should be for affordable housing only and not considered as conventional contributions.

28) No comment

Ref 45 Name Robert Greenwood

Response

I wish to comment on the proposals so hope you can accept this letter detailing my observations. Your question 4 asks firstly if I agree with the preferred option. Sorry, NO I definitely do not support the preferred option.

It would limit affordable housing to only 25% of any new development thereby allowing 75% to be open market or luxury or second home etc.

It would appear to be an easy option but fails to protect the National Park environment and heritage, clearly at odds with the very reason a Cairngorm National Park was set up.

My support goes to Option 2.

In my opinion any future development must be on a need basis. Not profit orientated at the expense of the environment. Clearly the National Park thrives on tourism. If the area just becomes another conglomeration it will lose its core attraction.

Option 2 seems to offer 100% development of affordable housing which is to be commended but I feel any affordable housing should still be restricted to those with a work/family connection to the area.

Option 2 appears best to protect or limit the effects of development on the environment and done sympathetically could create employment opportunities for those local people who wish to stay and work in the area.

In summary I do NOT support Option 3

I do support Option 2

Ref 46 Name Blair Atholl & Struan Community Council

Response

Question 1 - We agree with the preferred option, subject to the proviso that there must always be a mechanism to allow specific appropriate ad hoc development which is contrary to the spatial guidance.

Question 2 - We agree with the preferred option.

Question 3 - We agree with the preferred option. It is very important to highlight the needs / opportunities / aspirations of individual communities.

Question 4 - We generally support the preferred option. However, we note that, in Blair Atholl, the main sites identified for housing in the current Local Plan are unsuitable in their current condition due to flooding risk. As outlined in our response to Question 12, we do not believe the new site identified in the Blair Atholl spatial strategy is appropriate for housing and we would welcome discussion on alternative sites. We believe that it is important to identify sufficient land in the Blair Atholl area to allow for expected housing needs for several years.

We welcome the proposal to include a benchmark of 25% for the proportion of affordable housing in new developments. The affordable element need not be included on the same site as the other housing, but should be within the same settlement.

Question 5 - This is a good overall strategy, which appears to be reflected in the subsequent strategies proposed for individual communities and for rural areas.

Questions 6-11: not relevant to Blair Atholl & Struan

Question 12 - We have serious concerns about the proposal to include the site to the south-east of the village to provide opportunities for housing. To develop housing in this field would fundamentally alter the entrance to the village from the south. This is given added importance as Blair Atholl is the first community signposted after the southern entrance to the Cairngorms National Park on the A9, and will be the first impression many visitors have of the Park. We also have concerns about the suitability of the field for housing. The access to the site is unsuitable for any significant increase in traffic as the approach roads are both narrow with no pavements and blind entrances. There is little scope for widening either road to modern standards. Although the part of the field identified is outwith SEPA's 200 year flood zone, it does not drain well. It is also close to the local sewage works.

We recognise that the sites shown in the current Local Plan are unsuitable for housing because of the flood risk. However, we would suggest that, before ruling them out altogether, an assessment is made of the likely cost and effects of flood protection measures so that one or both of these sites could become suitable for development.

We welcome the recent visit by the Affordable Housing Officer to view the proposed and potential sites and to discuss the potential need for affordable housing and where it might be built. On his advice, we are planning to arrange an affordable housing "surgery" in the spring and will then wish to consider further the implications of the results of that surgery.

The Main Issues Report shows no requirement for housing land in Blair Atholl beyond that required for the 14 affordable homes identified on Perth & Kinross Council's current waiting list. We believe that there is a requirement to identify suitable land in the village for further development over time, both for open market housing and for further affordable housing in the future.

We recognise that, apart from the sites identified in the current Local Plan, any site for development of more than one or two houses will involve extension of the current village boundaries. We have concerns about all the sites discussed in the Main Issues Report. In fact, we note that all the sites, including the field to the south-east of the village, were graded "Red" in the Site Analysis and therefore unsuitable for development using the standard method. We believe that any such extension of the village boundaries should be fully discussed with the local community and in the first instance we would welcome the opportunity to discuss further the possibility of suitable sites for development over the planning period and beyond with local landowners and appropriate officers of the Cairngorms National Park Authority.

We agree with the proposal to use the land identified in the current Local Plan to provide opportunities for economic growth.

Questions 13&14: not relevant to Blair Atholl & Struan

Question 15 - The land identified in the current plan and shown shaded on the map in the Main Issues Report is currently completely occupied by House of Bruar for the purpose of car parking. There therefore seems to be little opportunity to use this land for economic growth unless alternative land is identified for car parking. As it is an "out-of-town" location, the vast majority of visitors to House of Bruar are travelling by car. At times, the car parks are very busy and it is difficult to see how parking provision can be reduced without affecting the number of customers. We suggest that either further land should be identified for parking so that the existing car park can be developed for other uses, or that an alternative site should be identified for economic growth. As the main source of economic growth is likely to be House of Bruar, it would make sense to develop the commercial activity adjacent to the existing buildings.

Questions 16-24: not relevant to Blair Atholl & Struan

Question 25 - We generally support the preferred approach. Our only reservation is the inclusion of the phrase "which matches historic growth patterns". While this is an admirable general principle for most developments, the approach must be sufficiently flexible to allow for a substantially greater development if it was felt to be appropriate for the area. As an example from our own area, some 20 years ago, an approach that matched historic growth patterns might well have rejected House of Bruar, even in its much smaller early days, yet it is now a major contributor to the economy of the area.

Question 26 - In general we agree with the preferred approach. However, we believe that there is an important role to play in ensuring that connections into and out of the National Park are developed in a way that ensures that visitors can reach the National Park by appropriate transport links and also that residents of the National Park can easily and conveniently reach local and regional services where these are based outside the National Park boundaries. This will include encouraging service providers and transport operators to ensure that all sections of the community, and particularly those without ready access to cars, can be fully served. This will include working with operators so that local services become better integrated with each other and with longer distance services rather than each service being operated in isolation. Reliable telephone and reasonably high speed broadband services are essential to ensure that businesses both in towns / villages and the countryside are able to compete effectively with those in more densely populated areas, and also that those living in and visiting the Cairngorms National Park have access to the services that are expected in the modern world.

Question 27 - We agree with the topics to be taken forward from the adopted Local Plan and the general approach they set out.

Question 28 - We agree with the topics to be covered by supplementary guidance which will support the Local Development Plan. We agree that the general direction given in the current supplementary guidance should be used as a starting point.

Ref 47 Name RSPB

Response

RSPB Scotland welcomes the production of this report and knows how important it will be in shaping the Cairngorms National Park during the forthcoming years.

The RSPB is the charity that takes action for wild birds, other biodiversity and the environment. As the largest wildlife conservation organisation in Europe, we have over one million members over 82,000 of whom live in Scotland and, in fact, 4% of the population of the Cairngorms National Park are RSPB members. Within the Park area, we own and manage in excess of 14,000 hectares of land for nature conservation on our reserves at Abernethy, Insh and the Crannach.

The RSPB's policy and advocacy work covers a wide range of issues including planning and regional policy, climate change, energy, marine issues, water, trade and agriculture. As well as commenting on national planning policy issues, the RSPB's professional conservation and planning specialists engage with over 1,000 cases each year throughout the UK, including regional planning, development plans and individual planning applications and proposals. We thus have considerable planning experience. The RSPB also makes over 100 planning

applications a year relating to its own reserves and estate.

RSPB Scotland scrutinises and frequently comments upon individual planning applications within the Cairngorms National Park but considers that getting the right policies in place is of greater importance as that helps steer inappropriate developments away from potentially damaging locations at an early stage.

We found the Report's layout useful whereby an explanation of the issues is followed by a series of questions. We have endeavoured to provide comments or answers to questions relevant to our organisation and have followed the layout and numbering of the Report..

Introduction

We welcome the exposition in paragraph 1.6 of the Sandford Principle – that where there is conflict between conserving and enhancing the natural and cultural heritage of the Park and its other three aims, greater weight must be given to the former.

Issue 1 – The Special Qualities of the Park How can we protect the special qualities of the Park and provide clarity on where development should and should not go?

We welcome the fundamental importance attached to the special properties of the Park and the recognition that conserving and enhancing them is absolutely key to future management. True sustainability must form the core of all decision-making affecting a National Park.

However, we are concerned that Maps 1a and 1b imply that sensitive areas are confined to the areas outlined. These maps illustrate the extensive areas of high wildness quality in the Park and the many designated areas and woodland types within its boundaries. However, wildlife of conservation concern is not confined to such sites and the policy needs to be amended to reflect this. We suggest an additional sentence, as follows:

“A biodiversity policy will also recognise the need to protect and enhance important wildlife found outside specified areas.”

Subject to this proviso, we agree with the preferred approach (Option 2) as this will more effectively ensure that development does not adversely affect the special qualities of the Park.

Issue 2 – Resources How do we plan for the sustainable use of the existing resources and respond to the effects of climate change such as water, energy, waste, carbon?

Again, we welcome much of this section though we feel that extra detail regarding sustainable flood management is required, in particular a target committing the Park to involvement in the Flood Risk Management Planning process. The first set of plans must be prepared by December 2015 with SEPA responsible for District Plans and local authorities for local plans, which will supplement and influence the District Plans. This will help the Park deliver on its natural flood management ambitions. Suggested wording for the target is “The Park will work with SEPA and Highland Council in developing Flood Risk Management Plans by 2015, which will provide opportunities and encouragement for natural flood management with its multiple benefits” and, “Where flood management measures are required, natural methods such as restoration of floodplains, wetlands and water bodies should be incorporated, or adequate justification should be provided as to why they are impracticable.”

We agree with the preferred approach (Option 3) as the spatial guidance will inform developers' proposals but with the backstop of firm policies.

Issue 3 – Supporting our Communities How and where can we make sure communities have what they need – jobs, tourism options, facilities etc?

Whilst we acknowledge local communities' desire for economic growth per se, we think this

should be reworded to read “the area’s special qualities will be sustained by a healthy, resilient and diverse economy.”

We favour the preferred approach, Option 2, which recognises that opportunities for economic development, services and facilities will differ between communities, being constrained in some locations by considerations of environmental priorities.

Issue 4 - Affordable Housing How and where can we meet the housing need in our communities – open market, affordable, local needs?

The level and location of new housing developments in the Park has been one of the most contentious issues in the recent past. Meeting the needs of residents currently unable to buy a home because they are outpriced in the market by those wishing to move to live in the Park, or acquire a second home there, without adverse environmental impact has given rise to tensions, a point emphasised by Reporters at the Local Plan Inquiry. In our view, the large number of new houses built and consented within the Park since its inception is not compatible with its status as a National Park.

However, we accept that it is not easy to provide adequate affordable housing without a larger overall allocation: given that funding for the former is likely to be heavily dependent upon the latter, it is perhaps inevitable that more houses will need to be provided than would be the case in an ideal world. But, to us, the overall allocations still look high and we feel that extra efforts need to be made to find ways of providing affordable houses with the minimum of extra development.

We disagree with all three suggested options. Whilst we have sympathy with Option 2 - Focus all new development on the provision of affordable housing by only identifying sites for 100 per cent affordable housing (bearing in mind the existing consents) – we consider it unrealistic to expect that funding for 100 per cent housing will be found. We strongly support the principle of a high percentage of housing being affordable, as that will mean fewer units overall and hence less pressure on the natural environment. It is essential that new housing development be limited to that identified as required in the housing assessments and which can be accommodated without adverse impact on the special qualities of the Park. There should be a thorough review of allocations in the existing, adopted Local Plans with no commitment to maintain environmentally unacceptable allocations in the Local Development Plan.

RSPB Scotland would be keen to be involved in discussions regarding this, the key issue of the Plan.

Issue 5 Spatial Strategy How and where should development happen in the National Park?

We see no realistic alternative to the one option proffered: clarify the settlement hierarchy so communities are clear what development they are likely to see in the future and where it will be located. This would include land for housing and economic investment. There should also be clarity about what is anticipated in rural communities outwith identified settlements.

Main Settlements, 10.8 Newtonmore

The new allocation to the west of Newtonmore is on fields with several productive pairs of lapwing. There is the potential to make the site better for a range of waders as part of the wider Strathspey Waders and Wetlands Initiative which is supported by a range of bodies including the National Park Authority. We do not think that this is a suitable location for a housing development. Additionally, this allocation is on a floodplain which Scottish Planning Policy advises against save in specific circumstances.

Other Settlements, 11.5 Boat of Garten

We agree that there is a need for affordable housing in Boat of Garten but controversy over successive planning applications has shown how difficult it is to develop here, given the

sensitivities of the adjacent woodlands. Any, or all, of the proposed allocations could have knock-on effects through disturbance upon capercaillie at Boat of Garten and the surrounding SPAs so there needs to be an appraisal at this stage of the likely number of houses at each of those locations and the level and nature of mitigation needed to ensure compatibility with national and European legislation. This would help ensure that allocations going forward to the next iteration of the Plan are acceptable although detailed scrutiny of all planning applications will still be required

Issue 6 Support for Rural Areas How do we plan for development that supports our rural areas - follow the existing patterns of development or take a different approach

We favour Option 2 - Focus development on key settlements. Restrict development outside settlements to particular forms of development/use. Such a planned approach is more likely to encourage sustainable service provision and prevent attrition of special qualities of the countryside by built development.

Issue 7 Connectivity and Communications How can we help people move around the Park – local access, tourists, people travelling through the Park?

We prefer a variation of the preferred Option 2. We are unhappy with the proposal that a review of the core paths network be carried out just to ensure it is sufficient to meet the needs of residents and visitors – it is essential that such a review considers the effects on the natural heritage of path provision to meet perceived need. In line with the Sandford principle, it may (albeit rarely) be necessary not to meet a need although we would expect that alternative, less-damaging, solutions may be found. A Habitats Regulations Assessment of any revised Core Paths Plan is essential.

Our suggested wording is:

Identify weaknesses in the communications network, focus on the 'hot spots' of activity and key links/routes across the Park, including review of the core paths network to ensure it is sufficient to meet the needs of residents and visitors. Communications improvements will only be acceptable, however, where it is demonstrated that they will have no adverse impact on the special qualities of the Park. Where key improvements are needed, developments will be required to make a contribution towards existing and new routes

15 – Supplementary Guidance

A policy on renewable energy should also be included here to ensure that any developments are compatible with the special qualities of the Park.

Ref 48 Name Nestrans

Response

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Cairngorms National Park Plan and on the Main Issues Report. Nestrans is the Regional Transport Partnership for the North East and our area encompasses the part of the National Park Area that lies within Aberdeenshire. As such we have a particular interest in the transport aspects of the two documents.

The draft plan recognises at the start that the national park does not exist in isolation but is an integral part of its surrounding areas and that management needs to consider the cross boundary influences and recognise its wider connections. However, the draft plan seems to pass over some important issues relating to transport. There would be value in recognising the role that the three Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs), including Nestrans, have and their role (along with the individual councils) in relation to the transport of visitors to the park as well as

transport within it. With the claimed 1.4million visitors to the park on an annual basis, transport to the park may well have a greater impact than transport within the park, particularly its environmental impact. In this context, the plan doesn't appear to engage with where these visitors come from and how they get to the park which might be a topic worthy of further consideration.

In terms of transport within the park, Nestrans supports the emphasis that is put on the promotion and development of active travel networks to encourage greater levels of cycling and walking. There is however more limited reference to public transport, particularly bus, which is equally important to encourage sustainable travel to and within the park for trips that are not feasible to cycle or walk.

You may already be aware that Nestrans operates a Sustainable Travel Grant Scheme which is available to organisations within our area, including our public sector partners, to support the development of sustainable travel initiatives. Organisations can apply for up to £10,000 in matched funding to support suitable schemes and initiatives. This may be of use to CNP or organisations within the Nestrans part of the CNP area who wish to develop sustainable transport projects. Further information on the grant can be found on our website www.nestrans.org.uk.

We do not have any specific comments on the Main Issues Report, in addition to the comments we have made above which I hope are helpful to you in finalising your plan.

Ref 49 Name Scottish Land and Estates

Response

Scottish Land & Estates is a member organisation that uniquely represents the interests of both land managers and land based businesses across rural Scotland. Scottish Land & Estates has over 2,500 members, a number of whom live and work within the Cairngorms National Park. Our members operate across a multitude of land uses and therefore the future success of the National Park and the provisions contained within the Local Development Plan (LDP) are going to have fundamental impact on the operation and forward planning carried out by our members. Scottish Land & Estates welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Main Issues Report consultation.

General comments:

The draft Park Plan (to which Scottish Land & Estates has also submitted a response) sets out a number of ambitions and outcomes for the National Park to achieve during 2012 to 2017. It is essential that the LDP is supportive of the Park Plan and is flexible enough to allow for the Park Plan to be successful. Scottish Land & Estates believes there is potential to deliver the 3 strategic objectives set out within the draft Park Plan through the LDP, if tensions between land uses are recognised. The planning system can aid the conservation and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage, allow for suitable development which in turn drives sustainable economic growth within a diverse community

while also maintaining the National Park as an outstanding tourism destination. Scottish Land & Estates agrees that the main challenge for the LDP is finding a way of identifying where development can occur (particularly in areas where there is significant pressure on land uses) whilst at the same time making a contribution to protecting the special qualities of the National Park.

Issue 1 - Special Qualities of the Park

Scottish Land & Estates supports a policy based approach towards protecting sensitive areas of the National Park from development. However it is important that guidance produced should be seen as just that - 'a guide' - and not seen as further planning control and mechanisms which restrict innovative ideas or economic development.

Issue 2- Resources/ Reducing our Consumption

Scottish Land & Estates recognises that reducing carbon emissions within the National Park may be a significant challenge due to the geographical natural of the region. Therefore we would support a move towards utilising the natural resources such as water and wind in renewable developments, for example in micro-renewable projects. Of course any project would have to be proportionate and sensitive to the sites surrounding it. Scottish Land & Estates would support this as a means of diversification.

Issue 3 -Support for Our Communities

Scotland Land & Estates welcome the preferred option in moving away from "key" settlements and allowing development to occur where proposals are best suited. This will lead to greater opportunities for development in other less built up areas of the National Park thus contributing to the sense of place and support for smaller rural communities and local services.

Issue 4 - Housing/ Affordable Housing

Scottish Land & Estates supports the point made in paragraph 8.2 "A key task for the Local Development Plan is to allocate sufficient land to meet the housing needs and demand In the Park."

We believe that housing availability and particularly affordability to those who already live and work within the National Park should be of significant importance. There is the potential for the loss of traditional skills within the rural sector of they can not afford to live where they work. Sufficient flexibility must be maintained with the affordable housing policy to ensure that all options for delivery can be considered - limiting delivery to those sites already identified in local plans should not be the only option.

There is scope for affordable housing to be delivered beyond the areas highlighted within Map 4. Small scale affordable housing developments can be critical to small or dispersed settlements.

Issue 5- Spatial Strategy

Scottish Land & Estates is in agreement with the Park Authority regarding paragraph 9.8 in that the LDP should support growth in local communities which fall outwith the larger allocated sites. This will help deliver the potential for development of a greater number of smaller self sustaining communities.

Main and Other Settlements
Scottish Land & Estates has not commented on individual settlements.

Issue 6 - Support for Rural Areas

We agree that communities outwith the main and other settlements are supported and given an opportunity to thrive. We also agree that the adopted approach should allow different approaches to be tailored to the needs of different communities.

Scottish Land & Estates supports encouragement of diversification opportunities within the National Park.

Issue 7 - Connectivity and Communications

Scottish Land & Estates agrees that increased connectivity and infrastructure is essential in the future success of the National Park. Access to services such as broadband are essential in growing businesses and are an essential asset in attracting visitors to the National Park. We support the approach taken in respect to core paths.

Other Issues- Supplementary Guidance

Scottish Land & Estates agrees with the topics to be covered by supplementary guidance to support the LDP. We have no further comments to make on supplementary guidance at this time.

Ref 50 Name Glenprosen Estate

Response

Cairngorms Local Development Plan Main Issue Report

Turning now to the Main Issues Report (MIR), many of the points raised above are relevant and will not be repeated in detail. The Estate reiterates its support for the principle that the management and use of land should deliver multiple benefits while ensuring the special qualities of Park are conserved and enhanced as described in Section 3 of the MIR.

Again the Estate support the stated strategic objectives of the National Park Plan as set out in the MIR

Vision. In response the key issues and questions, the Estate wishes to highlight the following at this stage:

Issue 1, Question 1:

The Estate would prefer an approach that not only balances the need to conserve and enhance the

special qualities, protects them from inappropriate development but also proactively supports and encourages appropriate development that help achieve the strategic objectives of the DNPP, rather than a policy direction that is predicated on overly restrictive policies. It is vital that well designed projects and initiatives in rural areas succeed and policy/ supplementary guidance encourages best practice, well designed and appropriate forms of development in all locations to ensure that the Park Plan objective of a sustainable and thriving economy is realised, particularly in unstable and uncertain economic times. Recognising that the land management sector, including shooting and stalking, plays a major role in conserving and enhancing the Park's special qualities a balanced and flexible approach is essential.

Issue 2, Question 2:

There is a need to ensure specific guidance and spatial policies are in place to support appropriate renewable energy generation projects in and around the Park but a strong stance must be taken to protect the Park's special qualities and local economies (which also generate significant benefits in neighbouring local authority areas) against inappropriately designed and sited developments, particularly wind farms - please refer to comments above for details. As stated in SNH's Guidance Notice (December 2011) on identifying Natural Heritage Issues of National Interest in Development Proposals, it is a matter of national interest that Scotland's renewable energy targets are met. In the context of achieving the four aims for Scottish National Parks, set out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 and the three strategic objectives for the Cairngorms National Park, the principle of "good development in the right place" becomes especially critical in relation to wind farms. SNH's Guidance Notice is important context to framing appropriate policies and guidance on the siting of wind farms.

Issue 3, Question 3

The preferred approach, which supports appropriate economic development in different communities, therefore including rural areas, is good. It is however, essential that the policy direction has sufficient flexibility (noted by the CNPA as essential under Issue 6) to ensure multi-faceted land management units and Estates can adapt and respond to changing economic circumstances in order to sustain rural economies, business and communities.

Issue 6: Question 25:

The Estate welcomes the support from the Scottish Government and the CNPA, as stated in the Introduction to Chapter 12 of the MIR, to promote economic activity and diversification in rural

areas,
recognise the growth of the economy is key to long-term prosperity and the CNPA's desire to retain
the flexibility in the current Plan and to promote sustainable forms of development. It is vital that
appropriate opportunities, dispersed across rural areas, are seized (and not restricted) to grow
and
sustain business and economic activity and it be recognised that the symbiotic relationship
between
promoting sustainable economic growth and conserving/ enhancing the special qualities of the
Park
will generate multiple benefits. Therefore, a policy approach that can balance the protection of rural
areas from inappropriate development and support integrated and multi-functional economic
development and initiatives is essential.

Ref 51 Name Scottish Government

Response

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above document. The Scottish Government welcomes the publication of this Main Issues Report, demonstrating the Cairngorms National Park Authority's commitment to put in place an up to date development plan framework for the Cairngorms National Park. I am responding on behalf of the Scottish Government, including Transport Scotland and Historic Scotland.

I have structured our response under general comments on preparing the plan, engagement and the spatial strategy for the Park, and then confined our comments to particular topics where we feel further consideration of the issues would benefit the proposed plan and help the Park Authority deliver the best possible Local Development Plan (LDP). In Annexes A and 8, we have included general and site specific comments from Transport Scotland and Historic Scotland.

Preparing the Proposed Plan

I note that in light of the relatively recent adoption of the current Local Plan, much of the current development plan policy approach is likely to remain applicable and will be included in the proposed plan.

Although you identify each of the main issues for the proposed plan, you will wish to be confident that you have fully exposed for scrutiny all the main planning issues and that, as the settled view of the Park Authority, the Proposed Plan does not introduce significant planning and environmental issues on which there has been no opportunity for meaningful engagement by the public and other interested parties. This may be relevant to any significant new proposals which appear in the Proposed Plan. You will also wish to ensure that you have fulfilled the requirement for early and meaningful engagement under SEA legislation. If significant new issues and options do emerge, you will wish to consider whether a further consultation stage is required.

Engagement

As work on the proposed plan progresses you should seek to undertake meaningful engagement with Transport Scotland and Historic Scotland, as well as with the other agencies and the Scottish Government.

Spatial Strategy

It is important that the Plan provides clarity to communities and developers about the type and location of development the Park Authority wishes to see develop in the Park during the lifetime of the Plan. We want plans to focus more on place than on policy, making good use of visuals and maps, and would encourage you to bring the spatial strategy element of the MIR towards the front of the Proposed Plan.

Main Issues

Special Qualities of the Park

Given the Park Authority's duty to fulfil the aims of the National Park (Scotland) Act, the inclusion of 'Special Qualities of the Park' as a main issue is considered appropriate. You will also wish to give proper weight to other significant issues, including housing and climate change.

Resources/Reducing our consumption

Whilst welcoming the reference to the Scottish Government's Zero Waste Plan and the requirement to view and manage waste as a resource, we would like to see greater recognition given to the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 in the Proposed Plan.

As a more general point, we expect that climate change will be a cross cutting theme which informs all of the main policy areas in the proposed plan, particularly renewables and waste. It is essential that the plan complies with Section 72 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, and you will wish to take account of the requirement for development plans to include policies requiring all new buildings to avoid a specified and rising proportion of greenhouse gas emissions. We would be happy to work with you as you develop your thinking on the best means of achieving this.

Support for our Communities

We are content with your preferred approach but as you work towards the proposed plan you will need to identify where the opportunities for economic development are and support these through the plan. It is essential that the proposed plan, through strong support for well-conceived development, facilitates sustainable economic growth in the National Park

Housing

We are concerned that the MIR does not give sufficient encouragement to flexibility and innovation in meeting the demand for both market and affordable housing, and are not at present persuaded that the indicative housing land allocations will provide for a generous supply of housing during the lifetime of the Plan. Furthermore the figures presented in the MIR are unclear as to whether they are for need or for demand.

We expect the Proposed Plan to allocate a generous supply of housing. We would like to work with you as your thinking on the Plan progresses to ensure that the Plan makes provision for a sufficient range of sites to provide choice and flexibility across the Park area.

Historic Environment

As a general point, we would suggest you give consideration to placing greater importance in the proposed plan of the historic environment and recreation/tourism opportunities in the National Park as a contribution to the economy.

We note your intention to carry forward the historic environment policies from the current Local Plan and we would encourage you to consider putting the detail of this into supplementary guidance.

For reference, we would draw your attention to the recent Historic Environment Scotland Act 2011 and publication of PAN 2/2011 Archaeology. Further comments and site specific detail on the historic environment is contained in Annex B.

Support for our Rural Areas

The plan should support opportunities for small scale housing development in rural areas and we are pleased that recognition is given to this in the MIR. We are also content that reference is made to design, siting and use of materials as playing a significant contribution to the sustainability of rural development sites.

Connectivity and Communications

We are pleased to see that recognition is given to development being as accessible as possible in order to reduce the need to travel.

You should consider promoting the use of green networks in the plan as an opportunity to deliver the Park Plan's strategic objectives, and in helping to increase accessibility within settlements.

Supplementary Guidance

It appears that the current guidance on Open Space will not become supplementary guidance (whether statutory or non-statutory). It may be beneficial to transfer any useful guidance from the current open space guidance into the proposed supplementary guidance on either 'Development Standards', 'Sustainable Communities' or 'Sustainable Design'.

Briefs and master plans could be used to identify the type and quality of open space required on a development site and how it should be integrated within the wider network, and highlight specific criteria such as maintenance requirements or access for disabled people.

We note that it is proposed to include supplementary guidance on Core Paths. There may be scope to broaden the supplementary guidance on Core Paths to include green networks.

Conclusion

I hope you will find these comments helpful as you prepare your proposed plan. The Scottish Government, including its agencies, will continue to work with you as you progress work on the plan.

Annex A: Transport Scotland - Main issues, general comments and site assessment comments

Main Issues

- In advance of the Proposed Plan being published, Transport Appraisal work should be undertaken in accordance with the Development Planning and Management Transport Appraisal Guidance (DPMTAG) to demonstrate the effects of development on the strategic transport network.
- The vast majority of the proposed housing developments will not impact on the strategic transport network. However, further detail should be provided on the proposed developments at Boat of Garten and Bruar to ensure that their impact does not have a material effect on the strategic transport network.

General

Transport Scotland welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan Main Issues Report (MIR).

In line with the Scottish Planning Policy, allocating land use development in sustainable locations is supported especially where these developments can best be served by the existing infrastructure, promoting modal choice and a reduction in the need to travel.

Accordingly, the potential impact of new and existing housing allocations, and commercial and industrial developments affecting the existing strategic transport network needs to be understood. The MIR should enable a mutual understanding of how the main aspects of the preferred and alternative spatial strategies are likely to impact on the strategic transport network. It is not clear from the Report what the effects will be.

Accordingly, a broad overview of the MIR has been undertaken and issues are highlighted that are considered to be the main areas of concern or where clarification is required to gain further understanding on the impact of the proposals.

From a roads perspective the strategic transport network relates to the A9 between Killiecrankie and Slochd; the A95 from Aviemore to Mains of Dalvey; the A86 between Kinlochlaggan and Kingussie; the A889 between Dalwhinnie and Laggan. For rail, the Highland mainline runs between Perth and Inverness and includes stations at Blair Atholl, Dalwhinnie, Newtonmore, Kingussie, Aviemore, and Carrbridge. The Strathspey Steam Railway is privately owned and it is not the responsibility of Transport Scotland. Ferry, port and aviation issues also fall within Transport Scotland's remit but it is considered that none of these aspects will impact on your work.

On 12 July 2011, Transport Scotland provided details to the National Park on the potential impact of a number of sites which could affect the strategic transport network. From the information provided, the proposed sites at Blair Atholl; Cromdale, Grantown on Spey; and Killiecrankie presented no issues to Transport Scotland.

However, at Boat of Garten there are potential issues with the existing eastern A95 junction in relation to the width of minor road and the general visibility at the junction. Transport Scotland would welcome further discussion on this matter. At Bruar, on the A9, further discussion will be required in relation to the traffic impacts of the proximity of the junctions on the 88079 with the A9, and also the proposed amendments to pedestrian movements.

There is no indication from the MIR that any form of Transport Appraisal has been undertaken. It is recommended that proportionate appraisal work is undertaken prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan in line with DPMTAG. Such appraisal work should provide a clear understanding of the transport implications for your spatial strategy. Given the nature of the allocations in the MIR and the comments provided below, this should be straightforward and we would be happy to meet with the National Park to take this matter forward.

One of your proposed key settlements is at An Camas Mor near Aviemore. It is noted that the decision to award Planning in Principle was made on 11 June 2010. The response to the planning application from Transport Scotland requested no conditions for this development of up to 1500 houses; associated business, community facilities and the provision of infrastructure.

Comments

Section 10 Main Settlements

10.3 An Camas Mor. No issues with this allocation.

10.4 Aviemore. Existing allocations are to be used for housing and employment so therefore there is no change in Transport Scotland's position, and any conditions that preexist shall be carried forward.

10.6 Grantown-on-Spey. Existing allocations are to be used for housing and employment.

Therefore, there is no change in Transport Scotland's position. Any conditions that pre-exist shall be carried forward. The effect of the Achnaganolin Industrial Estate needs to be understood to establish the effect on the strategic transport network.

10.7 Kingussie. Existing allocations are to be used for housing and employment. Therefore, there is no change in Transport Scotland's position. Any conditions that pre-exist shall be carried forward.

10.8 Newtonmore. From the proposals in the MIR it is unclear to the extent of development proposed. Accordingly, it is not possible to determine the effect these developments will have on the strategic transport network until appraisal work is carried out.

Section 11 Other Settlements

11 .4 Blair Atholl. From the information available it is unlikely that the proposals would affect the strategic transport network.

11 .5 Boat of Garten. It is noted that up to 50 units are proposed. Transport Scotland has no issues regarding the use of the west A95 junction which incorporates a right hand turning lane, but the eastern A95 junction may have to be upgraded to support this development.

Further transport appraisal work will be required to identify the need for further work.

11.7 Bruar and Pitagowan. There have been discussions in the past regarding this potential industrial development. Although it would be expected that the existing junction could accommodate such an improvement, it is important that dialogue continues on this matter.

11.8 Carr-Bridge. Existing allocations are to be used for housing and employment. Therefore, there is no change in Transport Scotland's position. Any conditions that pre-exist shall be carried forward.

11 .9 Cromdale. The scale of development proposed will not impact on the strategic transport network provided access for the large developments in the village are taken from Kirk Road and any appropriate improvements with the junction with the A95 are made.

11.10 Dalwhinnie. The scale of development proposed will not impact on the strategic transport network, provided no new accesses are taken from the trunk road.

11 .11 Dinnet. The scale of development proposed will not impact on the strategic transport network.

11 .12 Dulnain Bridge. The scale of development proposed will not impact on the strategic transport network.

11.13 Killiecrankie. Existing allocations are to be used for housing and employment. Therefore, there is no change in Transport Scotland's position. Any conditions that pre-exist shall be carried forward. The scale of development proposed will not impact on the strategic transport network.

Section 13 -Issue 7- Connectivity and Communications

We welcome your support for well planned improvements to the A9 road and the main railway line between Perth and Inverness. These improvements are set out in the Strategic Transport Projects Review.

Annex B: Historic Scotland - General comments and site assessment comments

General comments

Historic Scotland (HS) welcomes the recognition in the MIR of the contribution of the Park's rich cultural landscape to its special qualities. That said, it is disappointing to note that Historic Scotland were not included in any early engagement which took place on the plan. Of the issues presented in the MIR Historic Scotland's comments focus on the spatial strategy set out in section 9 and the other issues in chapter 14, specifically in relation to the cultural heritage topic to be carried forward.

The spatial strategy

General comments

There are several proposed land allocations which may affect the setting of category B and C(S) listed buildings at Ballater, Dinnet and Tomintoul. The National Park Authority should ensure that any development coming forward in these locations is considered in line with its listed buildings policy.

Historic Scotland has provided comments on a number of proposed land allocations which affect designated heritage assets. The comments are as follows:

An Camas Mor- HS was consulted on seeping reports for a proposed development at this location in 2008 and 2009. Their comments then highlighted the proximity of the proposed site to the scheduled monument known as Rothiemurchus, palisaded enclosure to NW of Dell Farm

(Index No. 9337). In 2008 HS raised concerns about the proximity of the proposed access to the development to this site. In light of this, any development taking place in this location should take into the monument's setting into consideration for both the development itself and also for potential impacts from associated services. Mitigation for potential direct impacts upon this monument should also be given due attention.

Blair Atholl- HS supports the National Park Authority's preferred option for development in Blair Atholl.

Braemar- Site H2 has the potential to impact on setting of 'A' listed Braemar Castle new development be considered in line with Council's policies for conservation areas and listed buildings. HS notes the strategic masterplan which has been produced for Braemar although it is not clear why this is not referred to in the MfR. HS supports the need for a strategic masterplanning process to assist future development of Braemar as a sustainable community. HS suggests that the 8 key themes and further development of the masterplan, embraces and safeguards Braemar's special architectural and historic character, together with its important landscape setting. HS would be happy to be consulted on subsequent development of the masterplan. To help further inform the process, they also suggest that a conservation area appraisal and review be undertaken, in collaboration with Aberdeenshire Council.

Strategic Option 1 b)- Business Start-up/Support Facilities. The identified buildings are listed. Castelton Hall is category B listed and St Margaret's Church is category A listed. HS therefore recommends that further investigation of the potential for these buildings, includes consultation with both Aberdeenshire Council planning authority and HS. While it is not mentioned in the masterplan document, it is assumed that further consideration of St Margaret's will be undertaken in collaboration with the current community based project and wider stakeholder group, looking at a range of options for the future of the church.

Strategic Option 7- Braemar Public Facilities. HS supports the need for improvements, including a better solution for coach parking, to enhance public space and townscape. Potential changes to the village centre car park, should take into account the need to safeguard and enhance the setting of the nearby Kindrochit Castle, scheduled monument. HS would welcome consultation on this.

Killiecrankie- HS notes that the allocations included in the MIR are being carried forward from the existing Local Plan. However, since the adoption of the existing Local Plan, the Inventory of Historic Battlefields has come into effect. Both allocations lie within the Killiecrankie Inventory battlefield site. They lie close to the location where the Government forces right flank was anchored, as well being as on the general line of their approach and retreat. Although, the proposals are unlikely to have a significant impact on the battlefield landscape both sites are in sensitive locations. Consideration should be therefore given to the impact on the battlefield and the need for appropriate mitigation highlighted.

General topics to be carried forward

Cultural heritage - HS welcomes the Council's intention to carry forward its suite of policies for the protection of the historic environment as they are content that they provide an appropriate framework for the consideration of this topic. However, there is a requirement through the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) for local authorities to include appropriate policies for battlefields in their development plans. It is not clear from the MIR whether the National Park Authority is aware of this although there are two Inventory sites within their which are Killiecrankie and Cromdale. In light of this, the National Park Authority should provide a policy for such assets.

Ref 52 Name

Response

Issue 1

Option 1 -reject

Option 2 – reject

Propose creation of third option specifically judging development against potential impacts

Neither Option 1 or 2 is adequate. Option 1 is certainly unsatisfactory while Option 2 does not go far enough in protecting the Park from inappropriate development. A third option is necessary which is much more closely linked to the Park's key aims and ensures that the development does not further damage the character and culture of the Park.

Issue 2

The pre-ambule to Issue 2 speaks at length of the need for communities to be sustainable and for the National Park to support them in this. The Park has to acknowledge that paving the way for major growth in housing in the area of the Park and creating a demand for it by publicising the Park – the legacy of Park's last five years – is diametrically opposed to this aim. Communities within the Park are already very dependant on commuting to larger settlements for employment and are, by their nature, in areas where extreme winters and a lack of employment are the norm. Promoting growth in these areas – other than to meet specifically local housing need - is creating growth in CO2 emissions and reveals a grave lack of 'joined up thinking' in the way the Authority attempts to reconcile its various aims.

Issue 3

Option 1 - reject

Option 2 – reject

Propose creation of third option.

Of the two Options, two is a more acceptable option but the key word in this option is appropriate. The document should contain more guidance on what the Authority means by this term. The last five years have left a legacy of permissions being given for completely inappropriate developments – particularly that for the proposed settlement of An Camus Mor. There is no way in which this settlement can be described as 'sustainable' and to do so makes a mockery of the term. Unless it can be proved that there is sufficient local employment for An Camus More residents to work locally and that these will not, once again, become second and holiday homes, An Camus More will never be a sustainable community.

A further, and equally damaging, issue is the effect that the growth in settlements promoted by the Park will have on local communities. Local communities have grown slowly over time, which has allowed them to keep the characteristics so applauded by the Authority. By dramatically increasing their rate of growth the Authority's current policies are leading it, not only to have a very damaging effect on the Park's local environment, but also a very detrimental effect upon its culture.

The phrase 'highlight the different communities' in Option 2 maintains the Park's approach to promoting growth in settlements and exacerbates the existing problem that the Park has created. The Park needs to look at all its aims and produce a coherent new option for Issue 2 which recognises the need to support communities in reducing dependence on carbon while recognising that promoting growth in these settlements (except in response to local - and not national need) is in no way sustainable.

Issue 4

Option 1 -reject

Option 2 – accept but would strongly prefer creation of new option 4 with residency criteria for all new build housing.

Option 3 – Absolutely reject

It is encouraging to see, at last, that the Authority recognising the impact on local housing availability of the purchase of local housing by those from outside the Park with wealth generated elsewhere. It would be more encouraging if it also recognised that it is not just the physical attractiveness of the Park area, but the existence of the Park, which is having an impact. Mortgage lenders are more likely to approve a loan if they know that it is for a property within a National Park as property values will tend to be higher and more stable and this assists those who wish to move into the Park and can afford the inflated property values within it.

Unfortunately the recognition of the problem has not extended into proposing appropriate options on Page 37. All options proposed by the Authority are inadequate although, of the three, option 2 is by far the most preferable and the Authority's preferred option the worst. A fourth option should be developed which explicitly links house building to residency criteria within the National Park. This is the only way in which the Authority can prevent the demand for housing from outwith the Park pricing local people out of the market and creating a perpetual pressure for further development with the resultant grievous damage to the Park's special qualities that has already occurred in some areas. The lack of such a policy has the potential to do great damage to the Authority's reputation.

Issue 5

I was astonished to read paragraph 9.12 in the Main Issues report which states that the Authority believes that there is no realistic alternative to the option they recommend. In the draft National Park Plan the Authority states that it wishes the Park to be a place where innovative approaches to land use are trialled, yet the Authority seems to have allowed itself to be backed into a corner by developers.

Issue 6

Option 1 -reject

Option 2 – accept

Option 2 is preferable to the other two options as it is the least likely to perpetuate the mistakes of the past. Allowing continued ad hoc development outside major settlements will steadily degrade the Park's special qualities. Considering that many visitors to the park are, unfortunately, likely to spend a large part of their time within the Park within their cars, it is critical to protect those areas outside settlements and maintain the sense of space and beauty along the Park's roads. This surely makes both business and environmental sense. Recent years under the Authority's management have brought ever increasing numbers of houses dotted along the Park's roadsides and these have a disproportionately greater impact on the character of the area than development within settlements. Allowing continued dispersed development in areas where this has previously taken place is simply a cover for more of the same and further damage. Development outside the key settlements should only be allowed where an extremely convincing case can be made for it. The Authority should develop a testing set of criteria for allowing such development.

Ref 53 Name Davall Developments

Response

Section 10.7 - Kingussie

We write in support of the preferred development/growth option to the north east for 300 houses and economic development as well as the smaller site south west of St. Vincent's Hospital. However, we are concerned if the ongoing Court of Session challenge by others to the major allocation of this land in the current/adopted Local Plan is successful and results in a loss or significant reduction in the supply of land there is a need to identify additional areas of land.

In any case by the time it takes to deal with the outcome of the challenge, the revised master plan is prepared, further consultation required on it is undertaken and then our clients organise the servicing of the land, there will be an even greater pent up demand for house sites before any house is built on the large allocation. Despite the ongoing economic recession there continues to be a shortage of smaller scale housing development opportunities in the village for which there is local demand. Development which reduces the gap between demand and supply will reduce pressures for unplanned countryside development and will encourage proactive growth in the main settlement areas, such as Kingussie. Scottish Planning Policy advises that having flexibility in the choice and location of sites is a key attribute of an effective land supply.

We also refer to the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan Inquiry Report (December 2009), at paragraph 54.8 on pages 257 and 258, which states:

"We consider that an allocation at KG/H1, when taken with what may arise by way of windfall sites, provides sufficient by way of choice of housing sites in Kingussie. With that in mind, we can see no reason to identify specifically further sites within Kingussie whether at West Terrace/Ardvonie Road, St Vincent's, Ardbroilach Road or, indeed, anywhere in the vicinity of West Terrace. We do not rule out the possibility that some or all of these may benefit from approvals which treat the units to be built out as windfalls."

The Main Issues Report now identifies the approved St Vincent's site, which although seems to run contrary to the Reporters' views, we have no issue with its inclusion in the new LDP. In this regard we ask you to treat the other sites mentioned in the same manner. We therefore request that the Park Authority at least includes the following areas, also outlined in red on the attached copy of Map 10, as specific allocations: -

a) Adbroilach Road, for 4 houses.

B) North of West Terrace/North West of Ardvonie Road also for 4 houses; vehicular and pedestrian access from Ardvonie Road /Middle Terrace.

In addition, we also request that the Settlement Development Area boundary be drafted to continue allow for smaller scale infill development opportunities such as at the west end of West Terrace.

Ref 54 Name

Response

Issue 1

Option 1 -reject

Option 2 – reject

Propose creation of third option specifically judging development against potential impacts

Neither Option 1 or 2 is adequate. Option 1 is certainly unsatisfactory while Option 2 does not go far enough in protecting the Park from inappropriate development. A third option is necessary which is much more closely linked to the Park's key aims and ensures that the development does not further damage the character and culture of the Park.

Issue 2

The pre-ambule to Issue 2 speaks at length of the need for communities to be sustainable and for the National Park to support them in this. The Park has to acknowledge that paving the way for major growth in housing in the area of the Park and creating a demand for it by publicising the Park – the legacy of Park's last five years – is diametrically opposed to this aim. Communities within the Park are already very dependant on commuting to larger settlements for employment and are, by their nature, in areas where extreme winters and a lack of employment are the norm. Promoting growth in these areas – other than to meet specifically local housing need - is creating growth in CO2 emissions and reveals a grave lack of 'joined up thinking' in the way the Authority attempts to reconcile its various aims.

Issue 3

Option 1 - reject

Option 2 – reject

Propose creation of third option.

Of the two Options, two is a more acceptable option but the key word in this option is appropriate. The document should contain more guidance on what the Authority means by this term. The last five years have left a legacy of permissions being given for completely inappropriate developments – particularly that for the proposed settlement of An Camus Mor. There is no way in which this settlement can be described as 'sustainable' and to do so makes a mockery of the term. Unless it can be proved that there is sufficient local employment for An Camus More residents to work locally and that these will not, once again, become second and holiday homes, An Camus More will never be a sustainable community.

A further, and equally damaging, issue is the effect that the growth in settlements promoted by the Park will have on local communities. Local communities have grown slowly over time, which has allowed them to keep the characteristics so applauded by the Authority. By dramatically increasing their rate of growth the Authority's current policies are leading it, not only to have a very damaging effect on the Park's local environment, but also a very detrimental effect upon its culture.

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Issue 4

Option 1 -reject

Option 2 – accept but would strongly prefer creation of new option 4 with residency criteria for all new build housing.

Option 3 – Absolutely reject

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Issue 5

I was astonished to read paragraph 9.12 in the Main Issues report which states that the Authority believes that there is no realistic alternative to the option they recommend. In the draft National Park Plan the Authority states that it wishes the Park to be a place where innovative approaches to land use are trialled, yet the Authority seems to have allowed itself to be backed into a corner by developers.

Issue 6

Option 1 -reject

Option 2 – accept

Option 2 is preferable to the other two options as it is the least likely to perpetuate the mistakes of the past. Allowing continued ad hoc development outside major settlements will steadily degrade the Park's special qualities. Considering that many visitors to the park are, unfortunately, likely to spend a large part of their time within the Park within their cars, it is critical to protect those areas outside settlements and maintain the sense of space and beauty along the Park's roads. This surely makes both business and environmental sense. Recent years under the Authority's management have brought ever increasing numbers of houses dotted along the Park's roadsides and these have a disproportionately greater impact on the character of the area than development within settlements. Allowing continued dispersed development in areas where this has previously taken place is simply a cover for more of the same and further damage. Development outside the key settlements should only be allowed where an extremely convincing case can be made for it. The Authority should develop a testing set of criteria for allowing such development.

Ref 55 Name Katherine Carington Smith

Response

Please note that I do not support Option 3 in relation to Question 4 (regarding housing). There are already more than enough holiday homes in the area and to add even more would surely destroy local communities. Is it therefore not against the aims of the National Park?

Option 2 (p37 of Main Issues Report) would be by far the better, identifying sites for affordable homes only and I would support Option 2.

I would hope that the National Park Authority can ensure that such homes are truly affordable in relation to the mean local wage, and not some developer's idea of affordable, as such figures are developers promote are far beyond the affordability of local people.

There should be a requirement for any further house building to be primarily for those with strong local roots or those who need to move into the area for work purposes.

Ref 56 Name Dinnet and Kinord Estate

Response

1 General Remarks

Dinnet is at an important location as the Deeside Gateway to the Cairngorms National Park. As a village it is also at the heart of a thriving rural estate, Dinnet and Kinord Estate, an important local employer.

As well as a strong relationship with The Park, Dinnet is situated within that section of the National Park which has strong links with one of Scotland's most economically active city regions. It is a feature of The Cairngorms National Park that it has wild land at its core but around the periphery are a collection of popular and attractive towns, villages and housing groups. It is therefore important for the Spatial Strategy of the LDP to seek to balance population growth within the boundaries of the National Park itself but to recognise the role that its settlements play in their housing market areas.

The primary demand for mainstream and affordable housing in the Aberdeenshire part of The Park is not derived from employment and business opportunities within the park boundaries but from opportunities in cities and regional economic centres outside it.

It is therefore important to recognise the contribution that villages like Dinnet can make in providing a sustainable location for land for appropriate effective housing development to satisfy demand from within the relevant housing market area.

Furthermore, it is important to increase the amount of economic activity which takes place within the settlements in the park, listed in the plan, in order to make them more sustainable and to accord with paragraph 1(d) of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000.

Dinnet & Kinord Estate is concerned that whilst the rhetoric of the plan supports this position, some of the general and site specific policies do not do enough to make the rhetoric a reality and might be counterproductive. The organisation therefore wishes to comment on certain specific aspects of the Main Issues Report.

2 Evidence Reports – Housing and Population

It is logical to begin by raising a concern with the depth and breadth of the evidence base used to calculate the appropriate amount of land for housing development to zone within that part of the park which is within the Aberdeenshire Rural Housing Market Area but outwith the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan boundary.

2.1 Aberdeen City and Shire Housing Needs and Demands Assessment, June 2010

The evidence report on housing and population states that the part of the National Park which is within the Aberdeenshire Rural Housing Market area is not a functional housing market area in itself. We would agree with that statement. Travel to work and travel to secondary education patterns for the 2 settlements within the area, Dinnet and Ballater are towards Aboyne, Banchory and Aberdeen.

The evidence report then goes on to say that for this reason “CNPA must . . . Take into account any other information available to provide sufficient/generous supply of land for housing to meet the need and demand.”

We understand that the „other information“ available and used by the Park Authority was the number of individual parties seeking a council house. As a basis for calculating a generous supply of land for housing this would seem deficient. The council house waiting list only assesses the need and demand for affordable housing. This approach therefore fails to assess the need and demand from any other sector of the market.

We would suggest that for the publication of the Draft LDP this approach is re-thought to ensure that the assumptions upon which the allocations of housing land within the Aberdeenshire part of the park are based are robust and credible.

Dinnet and Kinord Estate will undertake a local Housing Needs and Demands Assessment prior to the publication of the Draft LDP.

3 Housing/ Affordable Housing ISSUE 4

Dinnet and Kinord Estate agree with the preferred option of supporting the needs of communities by ensuring all main many other settlements have some options for future development.

4 Spatial Strategy –Settlements, Dinnet ISSUE 5

The allocation of housing land in Dinnet does not reflect role that the village plays in the settlement hierarchy nor does it reflect the sustainable location of the village as a potential focus for development in the A93 corridor.

Dinnet has a more sustainable relationship with the main regional centre of Aboyne with excellent public transport links, than it’s larger neighbour Ballater. Yet the plan focuses almost all of the housing growth for the area on that settlement.

As well as reviewing the basis of the calculation of housing land within the Aberdeenshire section of the park more housing land should be allocated in Dinnet in acknowledgement of its sustainable location.

The estate welcomes the zoning of the Clarack development which will become an important gateway attraction to the National Park.

Part of the site zoned for housing development at the eastern end of the village of Dinnet is in the process of being sold to a developer who has planning applications ready to submit. There is the distinct possibility that half of this development site will be built out prior to the adoption of the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan.

In the light of the information detailed above Dinnet and Kinord Estate will provide site specific proposals for additional housing land in Dinnet Village.

Ref 57 Name Tulloch Homes Group Ltd

Response

OTHER IMPORTANT POLICY ISSUES

We have been instructed by our clients, Tulloch Homes Group Ltd, to submit representations to the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNP A) Main Issues Report (MIR) on the emerging Local Development Plan (LDP).

Comment on Other Important Policy Issues

The MIR deals with seven broad planning issues which the LDP is to address. Chapter 14 of the MIR identifies general topics to be carried forward from the current adopted Plan into the LDP or Supplementary Guidance. Our clients note that Development Standards is one such general topic and the aim is to set any required standards for development which will be taken into account during the assessment of planning applications. Our clients would wish the general direction under this topic to be revisited to help in the early delivery of the development and growth sought under the Plan.

To date the practice of CNPA officers is to ask for a large amount of additional survey information prior to determination of planning applications. Much of the information requested could be left to be dealt with by way of suspensive conditions as happens in other Planning Authorities. CNPA's approach significantly increases the lead in time before applications are determined and increases the costs incurred by developers before they know whether the development will be supported. This can lead to costly abortive work. Many issues could be dealt with under delegated powers after a willingness to approve has been given, or could become matters specified by condition on a consent which can be addressed at the most appropriate time having regard to the build programme for the site. Our clients consider that the officers' approach to handling applications requires reconsideration in light of current economic circumstances and the Authority's desire to see provision of housing, particularly affordable housing, at an early stage in the Plan period.

Our clients welcome the opportunity of being able to participate in this MIR stage and look forward to being able to provide further information and comment as necessary through the next stages of the Cairngorms National Local Development Plan.

NEWTONMORE

We have been instructed by our clients, Tulloch Homes Group Ltd, to submit representations to the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) Main Issues Report (MIR) on the emerging Local Development Plan (LDP).

General

Our clients welcome the recognition given in the introduction of the MIR that while there are four aims for Scottish National Parks, pursuant to the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000, the objective is to deliver all four aims together. They welcome the equal importance being given to the promotion of sustainable, economic and social development of the area's communities. This underlines the fact that the Park consists of more than "huge granite mountains" and that development within the settlements has a critical role to play in ensuring the ongoing economic success of the area. The introduction to the MIR acknowledges the need to ensure that the Park remains "an attractive, vibrant and well-functioning place" in which to live and work as well as visit and the LDP must ensure that appropriate policy support is provided for development in key locations.

Issue 1: Special Qualities of the Park

Our clients support the proposed move away from dealing with the entire Park area as a whole. At 4528 square kilometres, the sheer scale of the Park means that it encompasses a wide range of different land uses and characters such that a "one size fits all" approach is not appropriate. Our clients welcome the recognition, however, that the built development plays just as important a part in the Park's success as the uninhabited upland. The MIR rightly recognises that the current approach to the special qualities of the Park does not provide developers or communities with any confidence. Adopting a more focussed approach which identifies areas which have special qualities and seeks to protect them through the spatial strategy will provide certainty for developers and landowners and will allow the CNPA to

direct development to the most appropriate areas. It should mean that outwith the sensitive sites, the development industry can invest in sustainable economic development which will benefit the overall Park.

Issue 5: Spatial Strategy- General

Our clients agree that the Spatial Strategy, as set out Wider Issue 5 of the MIR, which is "to retain the focus of development on key settlements" which are best able to absorb the bulk of future development (paragraph 6.11), is the most appropriate approach to adopt towards development.

It is noted the CNPA propose to maintain the current Local Plan housing allocations to meet the 20 year requirement of 2,900 units. This is welcomed as it gives certainty to the developers of those sites who have invested in bringing forward the land for development.

Our clients agree with the terms of paragraph 9.12, in which CNPA recognise that it would be "unreasonable" to meet the housing requirements in any other way which would ignore existing consents. It is submitted that this should also include allocated sites for which consents have not yet been issued.

Section 5 sets out what the main qualities of the Park. These are the big things, for example "the huge granite mountains", "a unique mosaic of habitats", "the great bulk of the mountains", and "a sense of wildness and space", (paragraph 5.3 and 5.4). This is helpful in providing development guidance for smaller settlements. While the villages in the Park need to be treated with care, they are not the main reason why the area enjoys Park status.

Issue 5 Spatial Strategy: Newtonmore

Newtonmore is identified as one of the main settlements in the settlement hierarchy for the Park (page 42, Issue 5) and our clients support the recognition of the role which Newtonmore will play in delivering development within the Park. Our clients support the preferred option in Newtonmore which is to use the existing allocated land to meet the need for new housing and economic development in both the short and long term. Our clients obtained planning consent on 25 August 2011 for the erection of 81 houses and construction of access roads at land between Perth Road and Station Road, Newtonmore wider reference 07/230/CP (The Highland Council reference 07/00153/FULBS). Page 58 of the MIR wrongly refers to a consent for "up to 80 houses" and this requires to be corrected in light of the consent granted to our clients.

As noted in the MIR this development is the first of a potential 3 phase development in the settlement. The MIR suggests that the subsequent phases would only follow if demand exists and once the initial consented phase is complete. Our clients support this phased approach to the sites.

Our clients welcome the opportunity of being able to participate in this MIR stage and look forward to being able to provide further information and comment as necessary through the next stages of the Cairngorms National Local Development Plan.

AVIEMORE

We have been instructed by our clients, Tulloch Homes Group Ltd, to submit representations to the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) Main Issues Report (MIR) on the emerging Local Development Plan (LDP).

General

Our clients welcome the recognition given in the introduction of the MIR that while there are four aims for Scottish National Parks, pursuant to the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000, the objective is to deliver all four aims together. They welcome the equal importance being given to the promotion of sustainable, economic and social development of the area's communities. This

underlines the fact that the Park consists of more than "huge granite mountains" and that development within the settlements has a critical role to play in ensuring the ongoing economic success of the area. The introduction to the MIR acknowledges the need to ensure that the Park remains "an attractive, vibrant and well .functioning place" in which to live and work as well as visit and the LDP must ensure that appropriate policy support is provided for development in key locations.

Issue 1: Special Qualities of the Park

Our clients support the proposed move away from dealing with the entire Park area as a whole. At 4528 square kilometres, the sheer scale of the Park means that it encompasses a wide range of different land uses and characters such that a "one size fits all" approach is not appropriate. Our clients welcome the recognition, however, that the built development plays just as important a part in the Park's success as the uninhabited upland. The MIR rightly recognises that the current approach to the special qualities of the Park does not provide developers or communities with any confidence. Adopting a more focussed approach which identifies areas which have special qualities and seeks to protect them through the spatial strategy will provide certainty for developers and landowners and will allow the CNP A to direct development to the most appropriate areas. It should mean that outwith the sensitive sites, the development industry can invest in sustainable economic development which will benefit the overall Park

Issue 5: Spatial Strategy- general

Our clients agree that that the Spatial Strategy, as set out under Issue 5 of theMIR which is "to retain the focus of development on key settlements" which are best able to absorb the bulk of future development (paragraph 6.11),. Is the most appropriate approach to adopt towards development.

It is noted the CNP A propose to maintain the current Local Plan housing allocations to meet the 20 year requirement of 2,900 units. This is welcomed as it gives certainty to the developers of those sites who have invested in bringing forward the land for development.

Our clients agree with the terms of paragraph 9 .12, in which CNP A recognise that it would be "unreasonable" to meet the housing requirements in any other way which would ignore existing consents. It is submitted that this should also include allocated sites for which consents have not yet been issued.

Section 5 sets out what the main qualities of the Park. These are the big things, for example "the huge granite mountains", "a unique mosaic of habitats", "the great bulk of the mountains", and "a sense of wildness and space", (paragraph 5.3 and 5.4). This is helpful in providing development guidance for smaller settlements. While the villages in the Park need to be treated with care, they are not the main reason why the area enjoys Park status.

Issue 5 Spatial Strategy: Aviemore

Our clients support the recognition given to Aviemore in section 10 of the MIR as one of the key strategic settlements in the settlement hierarchy (page 49/50/51 of Issue 5). Our clients agree with the preferred option, as set out on page 51, that land with existing permissions provide the opportunities for housing and economic growth within the Aviemore settlement in the next Plan period.

Our clients have invested in the expansion of Aviemore and are committed to enhancing the "key role" that Aviemore plays in the wider region by enhancing the housing provision on offer. They obtained planning permission reference 05/306/CP (Highland Council reference 05/00209/REMBS) on 4 March 2008 for the erection of 140 dwellinghouses, construction of roads and services and landscaping on the horsefield to the north of the Scandinavian Village, The Aviemore Centre, Grampian Road and this development is underway. They welcome the

ongoing identification of the site for housing, however, it is noted that the site boundaries do not appear to be accurately reflected in the settlement map in the MIR. Attached is plan of the consented site. The entirety of the site should be identified within the settlement boundary of on Map 7.

Given the importance which delivery of this site has for Aviemore and the wider objectives of the Park, our clients would seek comfort from CNP A that the Authority will continue to work with them over the life of the Plan to ensure that the site can continue to provide housing which is appropriate for the market, particularly in the current challenging economic conditions for housebuilders.

Our clients welcome the opportunity of being able to participate in this MIR stage and look forward to being able to provide further information and comment as necessary through the next stages of the Cairngorms National Local Development Plan.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

We have been instructed by our clients, Tulloch Homes Group Ltd, to submit representations to the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) Main Issues Report (MIR) on the emerging Local Development Plan (LDP).

Issue 4: Affordable Housing

The MIR identifies affordable housing as a major issue. The key task for the provision of affordable housing is to allocate sufficient land to meet the housing needs for 10 years with a broad indication of the scale and location of growth for up to 20 years. The MIR estimates that there is a need for 26 affordable units per year (paragraph 8.4). It is noted that approximately 575 affordable units already have consent or are pending the permission being issued which equates to 30 units per year over the next 20 years. The MIR acknowledged that "it would seem that the need will be met from existing consents". Indeed there is a clear over-provision of affordable units.

The MIR suggests a requirement to consider the "hidden need", but accepts that this is difficult to quantify. It would appear to our clients that there is a sufficient cushion within the existing permissions to accommodate any hidden need.

It is also noted that communities are looking for housing which does not necessarily fall within the definition of "affordable" under Scottish Government guidance.

The Authority have, correctly in our clients' view, rejected the current approach on provision of affordable housing and the option of only identifying 100% affordable housing sites. Our clients agree that it is only through the release of mainstream housing that any affordable housing will be delivered. A lack of mainstream housing consents has a direct knock on effect on the ability to provide affordable housing. Release of permissions for a wide range of housing types on a wide range of sites across the settlements within the Park will deliver housing to meet all needs. Our clients are concerned that the current requirement for all affordable housing to be secured through means of a section 75 agreement is slowing down the process and the provision of units within communities. The CNP A need to work with developers to release a broad range of houses and much of this can be done through design and/or condition.

Our clients note that there does not appear to be a clear justification for the application of a requirement for 25% affordable development in all settlements, particularly where the MIR acknowledges that existing sites will more than meet the need for affordable housing which is identified through the HNDA. Since the MIR also highlights that some of the need is not for housing which is "affordable" in terms of Government guidance, the imposition of a 25% requirement seems excessive. More should be done to release a broader range of mainstream housing across the Park. Insisting on a high percentage of affordable housing, in the strict sense, in practice means a reduction in the number of mainstream units provided at the lower end of the open market as developers/landowners seek to cover the cost of providing the affordable units in the sale of larger mainstream units. This will endanger the very units for which

the Authority have identified a need.

With regard to application of the percentage requirement for affordable housing, the MIR is not clear whether the recommended "benchmark" percentage of 25% is to apply when considering currently allocated sites which are carried forward.

NETHYBRIDGE

We have been instructed by our clients, Tulloch Homes Group Ltd, to submit representations to the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) Main Issues Report (MIR) on the emerging Local Development Plan (LDP).

General

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Issue 5: Spatial Strategy - General

Our clients agree that the Spatial Strategy, as set out under Issue 5 of the MIR, which is "to retain the focus of development on key settlements" which are best able to absorb the bulk of future development (paragraph 6.11), is the most appropriate approach to adopt towards development.

It is noted the CNPA propose to maintain the current Local Plan housing allocations to meet the 20 year requirement of 2,900 units. This is welcomed as it gives certainty to the developers of those sites who have invested in bringing forward the land for development.

Our clients agree with the terms of paragraph 9.12, in which CNPA recognise that it would be "unreasonable" to meet the housing requirements in any other way which would ignore existing consents. It is submitted that this should also include allocated sites for which consents have not yet been issued.

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with care, they are not the main reason why the area enjoys Park status.

Issue 5 Spatial Strategy: Nethy Bridge

Our clients support the preferred option in Nethy Bridge which is to use land with existing permissions to meet the needs for new housing and economic development in the short, medium and long term. Our clients obtained outline planning consent from The Highland Council on 20 February 2006 for the erection of 40 dwellings and business units on land at School Road and Craigmore Road, Nethy Bridge under reference 02/00045/0UTBS, however a reserved matters application pursuant to the outline consent for the erection 30 houses, 10 affordable housing plots, 8 small business units and associated infrastructure and landscaping (Highland Council reference 09/0003 7/RE.MBS/CNP A reference 09/052/CP) was refused by CNPA in January 2011 and turned down on appeal in July this year.

The MIR highlights the need to provide employment opportunities and affordable housing to retain the young people in the village and maintain the community's future sustainability and our clients remain committed to enhancing the community at Nethy Bridge through development of the sites for which outline consent exists. There are ongoing discussions with Highland Council and the CNPA over the detailed development of the sites and given the importance which delivery of the housing and employment units has for Nethy Bridge and the wider objectives of the Park, our clients trust that the Authority will give their assistance to bring forward the land in a way which balances the needs of the community, the aims of the Park and the current challenging economic conditions for house builders.

Our clients welcome the opportunity of being able to participate in this MIR stage and look forward to being able to provide further information and comment as necessary through the next stages of the Cairngorms National Local Development Plan.

HIGH BURNSIDE, AVIEMORE

We have been instructed by our clients, Tulloch Homes Group Ltd, to submit representations to the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) Main Issues Report (MIR) on the emerging Local Development Plan (LDP).

General

Our clients welcome the recognition given in the introduction of the MIR that while there are four aims for Scottish National Parks, pursuant to the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000, the objective is to deliver all four aims together. They welcome the equal importance being given to the promotion of sustainable, economic and social development of the area's communities. This underlines the fact that the Park consists of more than "huge granite mountains" and that development within the settlements has a critical role to play in ensuring the ongoing economic success of the area. The introduction to the MIR acknowledges the need to ensure that the Park remains "an attractive, vibrant and well-functioning place" in which to live and work as well as visit and the LDP must ensure that appropriate policy support is provided for development in key locations.

Issue 1: Special Qualities of the Park

Our clients support the proposed move away from dealing with the entire Park area as a whole. At 4528 square kilometres, the sheer scale of the Park means that it encompasses a wide range of different land uses and characters such that a "one size fits all" approach is not appropriate. Our clients welcome the recognition that the built development plays just as important a part in the Park's success as the uninhabited upland. The MIR rightly recognises that the current approach to the special qualities of the Park does not provide developers or communities with any confidence. Adopting a more focussed approach which identifies areas which have special qualities and seeks to protect them through the spatial strategy will provide certainty for

developers and landowners and will allow the CNP A to direct development to the most appropriate areas. It should mean that outwith the sensitive sites, the development industry can invest in sustainable economic development which will benefit the overall Park.

Issue 5: Spatial Strategy- general

Our clients agree that the Spatial Strategy, as set out under Issue 5 of the MIR, which is "to retain the focus of development on key settlements" which are best able to absorb the bulk of future development (paragraph 6.11), is the most appropriate approach to adopt towards development.

It is noted the CNP A propose to maintain the current Local Plan housing allocations to meet the 20 year requirement of 2,900 units. This is welcomed as it gives certainty to the developers of those sites who have invested in bringing forward the land for development.

Our clients agree with the terms of paragraph 9.12, in which CNPA recognise that it would be "unreasonable" to meet the housing requirements in any other way which would ignore existing consents. It is submitted that this should also include allocated sites for which consents have not yet been issued.

Section 5 sets out the main qualities of the Park. These are the big things, for example "the huge granite mountains", "a unique mosaic of habitats", "the great bulk of the mountains", and "a sense of wildness and space", (paragraph 5.3 and 5.4). This is helpful in providing development guidance for smaller settlements. While the villages in the Park need to be treated with care, they are not the main reason why the area enjoys Park status.

Issue 5 Spatial Strategy: High Burnside, Aviemore

Our clients support the recognition in section 10 of the MIR that Aviemore is one of the main strategic settlements in the settlement hierarchy (page 49/50/51 of Issue 5). Our clients agree with the preferred option as set out on page 51 that land uses with existing permissions will provide the opportunities for housing and economic growth within the Aviemore settlement moving forward.

Our clients obtained outline planning consent reference 03/00322/OUTBS on 1 December 2004 for a housing development with associated road, services and amenity ground on land at High Burnside Aviemore. On 2 February 2006 reserved matters consent for the erection of 75 houses, associated road works, services, amenity ground and masterplan was approved under consent reference 05/177/CP (Highland Council reference 05/00115/REMBS) and a further reserved matters consent was granted on 4 July 2007 for the erection of 46 houses and ancillary works under reference 07 /024/CP (Highland Council reference 07/000 14/REMBS).

Our clients welcome the CNP A's ongoing commitment to delivering housing on this site. It will, however, be important for the Park Authority to allow flexibility in the development of the site to meet changing housing and economic development requirements over the Plan period.

It is noted that none of the settlements in the MIR has an identified settlement boundary. It is assumed that other than new allocations, land within the settlement boundary will be shown as "white land" with no specific annotations to provide flexibility for development within the settlement in the future. This would assist in meeting the four aims of the Scottish National Parks (as set out in paragraph 1.4 from the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 ("the Act")), the last of which is the promotion of sustainable, economic and social development.

Our clients welcome the opportunity of being able to participate in this MIR stage and look forward to being able to provide further information and comment as necessary through the next stages of the Cairngorms National Local Development Plan.

CARR-BRIDGE

We have been instructed by our clients, Tulloch Homes Group Limited, to submit representations to the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) Main Issues Report (MIR) on

the Local Development Plan (LDP)

General

Our clients welcome the recognition given in the introduction of the MIR that while there are four aims for Scottish National Parks, pursuant to the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000, the objective is to deliver all four aims together. They welcome the equal importance being given to the promotion of sustainable, economic and social development of the area's communities. This underlines the fact that the Park consists of more than "huge granite mountains" and that development within the settlements has a critical role to play in ensuring the ongoing economic success of the area. The introduction to the MIR acknowledges the need to ensure that the Park remains "an attractive, vibrant and well-functioning place" in which to live and work as well as visit and the LDP must ensure that appropriate policy support is provided for development in key locations.

Issue 1: Special Qualities of the Park

Our clients support the proposed move away from dealing with the entire Park area as a whole. At 4528 square kilometres, the sheer scale of the Park means that it encompasses a wide range of different land uses and characters such that a "one size fits all" approach is not appropriate. Our clients welcome the recognition, however, that the built development plays just as important a part in the Park's success as the uninhabited upland. The MIR rightly recognises that the current approach to the special qualities of the Park does not provide developers or communities with any confidence. Adopting a more focussed approach which identifies areas which have special qualities and seeks to protect them through the spatial strategy will provide certainty for developers and landowners and will allow the CNP A to direct development to the most appropriate areas. It should mean that outwith the sensitive sites, the development industry can invest in sustainable economic development which will benefit the overall Park.

Issue 5: Spatial Strategy - general

Our clients agree that the Spatial Strategy, as set out under Issue 5 of the MIR, which is "to retain the focus of development on key settlements" which are best able to absorb the bulk of future development (paragraph 6.11), is the most appropriate approach to adopt towards development.

It is noted the CNP A propose to maintain the current Local Plan housing allocations to meet the 20 year requirement of 2,900 units. This is welcomed as it gives certainty to the developers of those sites who have invested in bringing forward the land for development.

Our clients agree with the terms of paragraph 9.12, in which CNPA recognise that it would be "unreasonable" to meet the housing requirements in any other way which would ignore existing consents. It is submitted that this should also include allocated sites for which consents have not yet been issued.

Section 5 sets out what the main qualities of the Park. These are the big things, for example "the huge granite mountains", "a unique mosaic of habitats", "the great bulk of the mountains", and "a sense of wildness and space", (paragraph 5.3 and 5.4). This is helpful in providing development guidance for smaller settlements. While the villages in the Park need to be treated with care, they are not the main reason why the area enjoys Park status.

Issue 5 Spatial Strategy: Carr-Bridge

Our clients support the recognition in Section 11.8.3 that Carr-Bridge has a key role to play in supporting the economy of the Park and that it is important to retain the settlement as a vibrant and sustainable community. The MIR also identifies its location close the A9 as of strategic significance. Our clients have invested in the village, obtaining outline planning consent on appeal on 1 February 2005 under reference PP Ai270/312 (The Highland Council reference

03/292/OUTBS and 04/00032/REFBS) for a residential development, amenity woodland, formation of roads, cycleways and footways and associated works on land bounded by Crannick Park, Rowan Park and Carr Road, Carr Bridge Our clients are currently in discussions with the Council over a detailed application reference 05/485/CP (The Highland Council reference 05/00325/REMBS) with a view to submission of a further application for 11 7 units on the site and therefore welcome the ongoing commitment in the MIR to delivery of this site over the next 20 years. It will be important for the site to be afforded sufficient flexibility for the consented development to meet changing housing and economic development requirements over that period.

It is noted that none of the settlements in the MIR has an identified settlement boundary. At Carr-Bridge the settlement envelope should be drawn around the south eastern boundaries of our clients' sites. It is assumed that other than new allocations, land within the settlement boundary will be shown as "white land" with no specific annotations to provide flexibility for development within the settlement in the future. This would assist in meeting the four aims of the Scottish National Parks (as set out in paragraph 1.4 from the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 ("the Act")), the last of which is the promotion of sustainable, economic and social development. Our clients welcome the opportunity of being able to participate in this MIR stage and look forward to being able to provide further information and comment as necessary through the next stages of the Cairngorms National Local Development Plan.

Ref 58 Name

Response

Issue 1

Option 1 -reject

Option 2 – reject

Propose creation of third option specifically judging development against potential impacts

Neither Option 1 or 2 is adequate. Option 1 is certainly unsatisfactory while Option 2 does not go far enough in protecting the Park from inappropriate development. A third option is necessary which is much more closely linked to the Park's key aims and ensures that the development does not further damage the character and culture of the Park.

Issue 2

The pre-ambule to Issue 2 speaks at length of the need for communities to be sustainable and for the National Park to support them in this. The Park has to acknowledge that paving the way for major growth in housing in the area of the Park and creating a demand for it by publicising the Park – the legacy of Park's last five years – is diametrically opposed to this aim. Communities within the Park are already very dependant on commuting to larger settlements for employment and are, by their nature, in areas where extreme winters and a lack of employment are the norm. Promoting growth in these areas – other than to meet specifically local housing need - is creating growth in CO2 emissions and reveals a grave lack of 'joined up thinking' in the way the Authority attempts to reconcile its various aims.

Issue 3

Option 1 - reject

Option 2 – reject

Propose creation of third option.

Of the two Options, two is a more acceptable option but the key word in this option is

appropriate. The document should contain more guidance on what the Authority means by this term. The last five years have left a legacy of permissions being given for completely inappropriate developments – particularly that for the proposed settlement of An Camus Mor. There is no way in which this settlement can be described as 'sustainable' and to do so makes a mockery of the term. Unless it can be proved that there is sufficient local employment for An Camus More residents to work locally and that these will not, once again, become second and holiday homes, An Camus More will never be a sustainable community.

A further, and equally damaging, issue is the effect that the growth in settlements promoted by the Park will have on local communities. Local communities have grown slowly over time, which has allowed them to keep the characteristics so applauded by the Authority. By dramatically increasing their rate of growth the Authority's current policies are leading it, not only to have a very damaging effect on the Park's local environment, but also a very detrimental effect upon its culture.

The phrase 'highlight the different communities' in Option 2 maintains the Park's approach to promoting growth in settlements and exacerbates the existing problem that the Park has created. The Park needs to look at all its aims and produce a coherent new option for Issue 2 which recognises the need to support communities in reducing dependence on carbon while recognising that promoting growth in these settlements (except in response to local - and not national need) is in no way sustainable.

Issue 4

Option 1 -reject

Option 2 – accept but would strongly prefer creation of new option 4 with residency criteria for all new build housing.

Option 3 – Absolutely reject

It is encouraging to see, at last, that the Authority recognising the impact on local housing availability of the purchase of local housing by those from outside the Park with wealth generated elsewhere. It would be more encouraging if it also recognised that it is not just the physical attractiveness of the Park area, but the existence of the Park, which is having an impact. Mortgage lenders are more likely to approve a loan if they know that it is for a property within a National Park as property values will tend to be higher and more stable and this assists those who wish to move into the Park and can afford the inflated property values within it.

Unfortunately the recognition of the problem has not extended into proposing appropriate options on Page 37. All options proposed by the Authority are inadequate although, of the three, option 2 is by far the most preferable and the Authority's preferred option the worst. A fourth option should be developed which explicitly links house building to residency criteria within the National Park. This is the only way in which the Authority can prevent the demand for housing from outwith the Park pricing local people out of the market and creating a perpetual pressure for further development with the resultant grievous damage to the Park's special qualities that has already occurred in some areas. The lack of such a policy has the potential to do great damage to the Authority's reputation.

Issue 5

I was astonished to read paragraph 9.12 in the Main Issues report which states that the Authority believes that there is no realistic alternative to the option they recommend. In the draft National Park Plan the Authority states that it wishes the Park to be a place where innovative approaches

to land use are trialled, yet the Authority seems to have allowed itself to be backed into a corner by developers.

Issue 6

Option 1 -reject

Option 2 – accept

Option 2 is preferable to the other two options as it is the least likely to perpetuate the mistakes of the past. Allowing continued ad hoc development outside major settlements will steadily degrade the Park's special qualities. Considering that many visitors to the park are, unfortunately, likely to spend a large part of their time within the Park within their cars, it is critical to protect those areas outside settlements and maintain the sense of space and beauty along the Park's roads. This surely makes both business and environmental sense. Recent years under the Authority's management have brought ever increasing numbers of houses dotted along the Park's roadsides and these have a disproportionately greater impact on the character of the area than development within settlements. Allowing continued dispersed development in areas where this has previously taken place is simply a cover for more of the same and further damage. Development outside the key settlements should only be allowed where an extremely convincing case can be made for it. The Authority should develop a testing set of criteria for allowing such development.

Ref 59 Name Lude Estate

Response

I am writing on behalf of my client, the Lude Estate (the Estate), in response to the Cairngorms National Park Authority Local Development Plan Main Issues Report (MIR) Consultation that is currently underway.

I write specifically regarding several potential development sites within the Estates ownership adjacent to the settlements of Bridge of Tilt and Old Bridge of Tilt. These sites were promoted to the Perth and Kinross Local Development Plan consultation in June 2009. The land relating to these sites was subsequently incorporated within the Cairngorms National Park as part of its expansion in October 2010. Given this the Cairngorms National Park Authority reviewed the representations for the sites as part of its pre MIR consultation in June 2010.

Four sites in total have been promoted to date, with the National Park Authorities response to these being set out in the MIR and accompanying studies.

This representation seeks to respond to the points raised by the National Park Authority in the MIR with

regards to the settlements of Blair Atholl and Old Bridge of Tilt.

The Lude Estate has a strong history in providing land for development for the settlement of Blair Atholl and particularly the area of Bridge of Tilt on the eastern side of the River Tilt. This included significant land

releases in the 1960's and 1970's for use by the local population for affordable housing.

Additionally land has been released by the Estate periodically for use as Council housing, as well as to construct the local school and police house.

There is now very limited land within Bridge of Tilt and Blair Atholl as a whole on which to provide affordable and market value housing. The Estate is conscious of the importance of providing local housing to ensure the continued economic development of Blair Atholl, and is keen to liaise with the National Park Authority to provide appropriate and effective land for development.

The Estate believes that the sites being promoted can go some way to contributing to the local

housing need at Blair Atholl in the short and medium term.

Blair Atholl

The Estate has promoted one site (NPA Reference 019a) at Blair Atholl adjacent to the eastern edge of the settlement boundary at Bridge of Tilt.

The MIR identifies a Preferred Option and an Alternative Option for the settlement:

Option 1 - Preferred Option

- Include the site to the south-east of the village to provide opportunities for housing.
- Use the land identified in the current Local Plan to provide opportunities for economic growth.

Option 2 -Alternative Option

- Retain the sites included in the current Local Plan to provide opportunities for housing.
- Use the land identified in the current Local Plan to provide opportunities for economic growth.
- Identify no new land.

The site to the east of Blair Atholl (NPA Reference 019a) submitted by the Estate has been identified as the

preferred housing site in Option 1. The Estate fully supports the identification of this land for housing in the

forthcoming Local Development Plan, and so agree with the Park Authorities Option 1 for Blair Atholl.

We do not believe that Option 2 is appropriate at this time. The existing sites have been identified for

housing in the Perth and Kinross Highland Area Local Plan since it was published in 2000. Since 2000 we

are not aware of any housing application having been submitted on the sites. In addition these sites are at

risk of flooding as identified by the National Park study and the SEPA indicative flood risk map.

Given this we do not believe that the existing allocations represent effective housing sites for the future.

It is important to identify effective housing sites for local housing, especially in rural communities, and if there is any doubt of over the effectiveness of housing sites the National Park Authority should discount these.

As already recognised, vacant land within Blair Atholl is severely restricted at present. And as such,

discounting the current allocations, housing must be provided outwith the existing settlement boundary. It is our opinion that the submitted site (NPA Ref 019a) is best suited for this.

To conclude we support the preferred option at Blair Atholl.

Old Bridge of Tilt

In addition to the housing site promoted adjacent to Blair Atholl, the Estate sought to promote three further sites at Old Bridge of Tilt to the north of Blair Atholl.

Whilst we recognise that the National Park Authority wishes to focus housing development adjacent to Blair Atholl, we believe that small scale housing close to Blair Atholl could have a role to play in the continued development of the immediate area. As discussed above there is a severely limited supply of vacant development land in Blair Atholl. To take some of the pressure off the main settlement at Blair Atholl we believe that the National Park Authority should advocate small scale appropriate housing sites within existing building groups close to Blair Atholl.

The Estate believes that Old Bridge of Tilt could provide for some of this need. The Estate has considered

the MIR response to each of the sites submitted to the previous consultation period (NPA Ref

019b, 019c,

019d) and has prepared an amended site to be considered by the National Park Authority. This amended

site avoids the risk of settlement coalescence with Blair Atholl and concentrates the majority of the proposed allocation as being within the existing settlement boundary.

The attached plan shows the location of the proposed allocation.

This representation supports the MIR assertion that effective housing land should be provided at Blair Atholl.

The Estate supports the Preferred Option for this as set out in the MIR In addition the Estate asks that the

Council considers land within the settlement of Old Bridge of Tilt for a further small scale housing allocation.

The Estate is committed to provide an element of affordable housing as part of any allocation, and would

reiterate its willingness to enter into discussions with the National Park Authority over how to deliver this in the best locations to address the local need. The Estate has already met with Di Alexander, the Affordable Housing Officer at the Cairngorms National Park Authority. As part of this meeting the delivery of affordable housing was discussed on land within the ownership of the Estate adjacent to the railway tracks in the south of Bridge of Tilt and elsewhere. The Estate is keen that these discussions continue alongside the Development Plan Process.

(Map provided)

Ref 60 Name Forest Holidays LLP

Response

The Main Issues, as identified within the consultation document, are intended to deliver the 3 strategic objectives set out within the Draft National Park Plan, and set out the particular issues that planning and development can address to help deliver these objectives.

One of the challenges identified within the Main Issues Report is that the National Park is an economic asset to Scotland as a whole, particularly as an internationally recognised tourism destination, and that management of both land and resources must balance with the demand for economic growth. We welcome the National Park's acknowledgement of this objective and the role to be played in the co-ordinated management and development of the Park, which is delivered by public, private, voluntary sector organisations and individuals.

However, given the recognised importance of tourism within the National Park to the national as well as local economy, we are surprised that it has not been included more specifically within the Main Issues. Instead, it is regarded as an 'Other Issue', with the preferred approach being broadly consistent with the current adopted Local Plan. Further emphasis and support should be given to the enhancement of the visitor destination venues together with the associated infrastructure supporting same i.e. accommodation providers.

In response to the questions in the Main Issues Report, we respond as follows.

Q1 -We support the Preferred Approach as long as beneficial economic development is not unnecessarily constrained in designated sites where there will be no adverse impact on the sensitive designations or where appropriate mitigation can be provided.

Q3- Whilst we agree with the Preferred Approach, there is a lack of information within the Main Issues Report on the National Park Authority's framework for development within the recognised

areas of greatest visitor pressure. It is important for the Report to provide support for existing destination venues to be allowed to grow and thus support established businesses to grow and flourish.

Q5 - We agree with the National Park Authority that the current approach provides the most suitable framework for directing development within the National Park. Particularly we would welcome the continuation of a flexible approach to development outwith the settlements to allow for well-designed schemes which have a particular locational need and which support sustainability in local dispersed communities.

Q25 - Whilst we agree with the outline details in the preferred approach, there needs to be more information provided to inform what the National Park Authority would consider to be 'inappropriate development' in the rural areas. This would provide a clear direction for developers in bringing forward development that is needed within these areas.

Q27 - Both the Draft National Park Plan and Main Issues Report set out the importance of tourism in achieving the 4 aims of National Parks. In order to achieve the strategic objectives and vision set out in the Draft National Park Plan, the National Park Authority must provide appropriate support of both existing and new tourism development in suitable areas (both within and outwith settlements) that conform to the 4 aims for Scottish National Parks. In this regard, we welcome the proposal to take forward the current approach to tourism development as set out within the current adopted Local Plan.

Q28 - To enable comprehensive development or redevelopment of appropriate large scale sites within the National Park, and in line with the collaborative approach encouraged by the Draft National Park Plan, we would welcome the development of Site Specific Development Briefs which involve all interested stakeholders. As the National Park Authority recognises, the management of the Park is delivered by a wide range of public, private, voluntary sector organisations and individuals and a collaborative approach would, therefore, be encouraged in the development and delivery of these briefs.

Issue 3 makes specific reference to the area of high intensity visitor pressure from Aviemore to Cairngorm Mountain, which includes Glenmore Forest Park. Over the past few decades, development at Glenmore Village has grown in an ad hoc way, with no overall vision or spatial planning aims. Issue 6 of the Main Issues Report identifies that the current approach to development within the Rural Areas has been flexible but has been reactive and not proactive. Development at Glenmore Village has not been strategically planned and unfortunately does not provide the world class sustainable tourism destination that is a strategic objective of the National Park Plan.

For this reason, we propose that a development brief of Glenmore Village is prepared in a collaborative way to accommodate the needs of the National Park Authority and all key stakeholders to ensure that its future development is delivered in a manner which respects the sensitive ecological attributes and special qualities of the area and the Park as a whole but also achieves an holistic approach to the current and future development needs of the Village. In this way, this area of high visitor pressure can become the outstanding visitor experience that the National Park Plan is working to achieve.

The pressures on Glenmore Village are currently the volume of visitor numbers with vehicles during the summer and at other peak times, visiting the beach and the forest, and at other peak times a number of special events including concerts, sled dog racing etc. This results in heavy

traffic and large visitor numbers within the village with a need for accommodation, which puts pressure on existing camping and caravanning provision. The re-planning of Glenmore by producing an overall vision for the area, in the form of a Development Brief, will ensure that these identified pressures and demands are appropriately met and that visitor numbers and activity is more evenly spread throughout the year.

Ref 61 Name The Cairngorms Campaign & Scottish Wild Land Group

Response

The Cairngorms Campaign and The Scottish Wild Land Group welcome the opportunity to comment on the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan – Main Issues Report (MIR). The Cairngorms Campaign is a Scottish Registered Charity, number SCO5523, with objects to promote public appreciation of, and care for, the character, beauty and ecology of the Cairngorms area, and to encourage all concerned to foster or participate in active conservation of the Cairngorms area. The Scottish Wild Land Group is a Scottish Registered Charity, number SC004014, which aims to protect and preserve Scotland's wild land.

ISSUE 1 SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE PARK

The MIR provides a number of pieces of information upon which the issue of protecting the special qualities is to be determined. The special qualities themselves (Table 1), the Wildness map (1a) and the other information map (1b) and also Map 2. All are considered inadequate. Special Qualities As outlined in our response to the draft National Park Plan, the Cairngorms Campaign sees no reason to replace the fairly detailed descriptions given in the NPP 2007 (pp. 25-27), which at least attempted to describe in some depth a range of special qualities, albeit incompletely (it failed, for example, to mention birch and juniper woodlands) with the brief outlines given in the draft NPP. It is, of course, the case that the briefer and more general the description of a quality is, the easier it is to ignore it and the more difficult it is to point out that a proposal may damage it.

The CNPA's descriptions of the special qualities provide little of any substance whereby they can be adequately recognised and protected. Table 2.1 and the accompanying text should not read like an exercise in poetic phraseology, but should be a tool whereby the special qualities are adequately and precisely described, so that their condition might be properly recognised and monitored, and thereby protected and enhanced.

The entire section on special qualities in the MIR (pp.17-20) is completely unacceptable, and should be re-written, based on the special qualities section of the NPP 2007.

The Wildness Map is of far too small a scale to provide adequate information and we also have considerable misgivings concerning the accuracy of the map in identifying wild land correctly. It appears, rather conveniently, to identify almost all areas where there is any potential for development as "low" wildness. That being the case, two questions arise:

1. How can the Wildness Map provide any useful discriminatory value for developers in choosing potential development sites, or for the CNPA in assessing them, when almost all such sites have the same wildness score?

2. is the real intention of the Wildness Map simply therefore to provide any potential developer with a positive score as far as development is concerned? Almost all potential developers will be able to claim that their proposed development has a low wildness score and is therefore on that

issue acceptable, even though in reality their proposal might have significant consequences for wildness.

Map 1b The scale used makes detail and specific sites illegible and the map is hopelessly cluttered. The categories chosen for native woodland seem curious, and are anyway unrecognisable on Map 1b.

The public are placed at a significant disadvantage because of these issues and the CNPA does not appear to have provided any justification for providing maps that inhibit proper engagement of the public in a consultation document. Equivalent concerns regarding such information were raised about the first Local Plan during its consultation stage.

The Cairngorms Campaign has no confidence in the treatment of Issue 1 by the CNPA, as outlined in the MIR.

Question 1 - We have no confidence that either Option 1 or Option 2 will be effective in protecting the special qualities when faced with the juggernaut of rapidly expanding housing and population. The CNPA has adopted an unrealistic position: that of pretending that Options can be effective when there is no reasonable prospect of that being the case. The CNPA thereby neglects its statutory duties and brings itself into disrepute.

ISSUE 2 - RESOURCES/REDUCING OUR CONSUMPTION

Question 2

It has not been possible to find the interactive form of Map 2 p.27 – it does not appear to exist. If it does exist then the exact url should be provided, not merely the basic url of the CNPA website.

The questions asked do not seem to bear much relation to the preamble, or express clearly what is being asked.

Moreover, to pretend that the CNPA is responding to the need to reduce consumption whilst simultaneously promoting an unsustainable rapid growth in housing, particularly one based upon building more than 75% open market luxury houses to cater for demand for second/holiday/retirement/commuter houses, is absurd. It is analogous to a householder who runs a large car and turns the central heating up, deluding himself that he is saving the planet by installing a couple of low energy light bulbs.

We would be concerned were any mechanism to imply “that the areas of opportunity have unconstrained options for development” as indicated might be the case for Option 2, so that is certainly not supported.

Otherwise, the Cairngorms Campaign can see little merit in engaging with this question whilst the CNPA pursues other policies that will make any gains from these policies insignificant.

ISSUE 4 - HOUSING/AFFORDABLE HOUSING

This section starts with the statement:

“The dominance of (these) low paid sectors means that many of the people working in the Park are relatively worse off to (sic) people in other parts of Scotland.”

This statement gives the impression that the park residents are economically disadvantaged compared to those who live in other parts of Scotland. However, such an impression is misleading. As stated in the response to the draft National Park Plan:

“The information, such as it is, provided by the CNPA on the economic status of CNP residents appears at odds with the results of the 2001 census, some of which is shown in the following Table:

(Table supplied showing results from 2001 census)

This information, albeit awaiting updating from the 2011 census, indicates that in these settlements CNP residents generally enjoy more employment and are healthier and wealthier than in the rest of Scotland, and usually in the rest of Highland also. In addition to these material comforts, CNP residents also enjoy the benefits of living in a relatively crime free and unpolluted environment of outstanding quality.”

It would be surprising if, a decade after this information was provided by the 2001 Census and eight years after the formation of the national park, the relative material condition of park residents had substantially deteriorated. The fact is that this information, albeit incomplete, provides no support for the suggestion that park residents are on average worse off than people elsewhere in Scotland.

Question 4

Do you agree with the preferred option?

NO. We firmly reject Option 3.

The preferred Option 3 decreases the proportion of affordable housing built compared with recent years. It means that, in order to cater for the number of affordable houses required, even more open market houses will be built, meaning even more environmental damage in the form of unsympathetic cramming and expansion of established villages. That will further erode their character and setting and cause further imbalance in the social structure as such open market housing is almost exclusively occupied by wealthy people from elsewhere. For that Option to be the preferred one by a National Park Authority charged with the statutory duty of conserving and enhancing both the natural and the cultural heritage of the national park is not acceptable.

How does encouraging in-migration of large numbers of wealthy individuals from elsewhere conserve and enhance the cultural heritage of Highland villages?

How does increasing the size of such villages by substantial amounts with luxury housing conserve and enhance their character and setting?

When many of these villages are surrounded by land of high environmental quality, how does covering these areas with unnecessary luxury houses conserve and enhance the natural heritage?

The answer to all of these questions is obviously that it does not. Yet the CNPA does not address these questions.

Nor does the CNPA provide any analysis of the previous twenty years, during which time a policy of trying to provide about 25-40% of affordable houses in developments has been in operation.

- how many affordable houses have been built in that time in what is now the CNP, and how many of them were and are occupied by local people?
- in other words, how successful or otherwise has the 25-40% policy been?
- how does the present situation with respect to need for affordable housing by local people compare with the situation twenty years ago? Are things better or worse after twenty years of

this policy?

The CNPA seems unable to answer these questions, yet is proposing to continue a policy that, it appears, will actually produce a lower proportion of affordable houses.

This appears to the Cairngorms Campaign as a dereliction of the duty of the CNPA towards its statutory duties.

The effects of this supposed 25-40% policy over the last twenty years can now be seen on the ground and have caused considerable disquiet and adverse comment amongst locals and visitors alike.

- areas of land that were available (albeit of varying suitability) within and close to settlements, which could have been used for affordable housing, have been largely consumed by luxury houses so that such land is no longer available. Future growth is thus pushed into less and less suitable locations, frequently onto land of high environmental value, including ancient woodland, causing more environmental damage and more outrage amongst the villagers effected.
- landowners have become used to selling plots at greatly inflated prices. The price of a plot is a substantial proportion of the cost of a putative affordable house, and a large part of the reason why such affordable houses are not built. A landowner is not easily persuaded to reduce the price of a plot if he considers that there is a good chance of having a luxury house built upon it and he has become accustomed to obtaining it. In other words, the existence of the temptation of luxury houses diminishes the incentive to allow the building of affordable houses.

Moreover, the practice, to some extent encouraged by the 25-40% policy, of allocating areas for relatively very large numbers of houses in large estates has

- impacted negatively on small local builders who cannot compete with large building companies from outwith the CNP and
- had a hugely negative impact on the character and setting of villages.

The continuation of this damaging 'business as usual' approach to housing policy is based on the "Main Issues Report - Background Evidence 1 Housing and Population", which claims that it "sets out the rationale for the new housing requirements identified in the Main Issues Report."

Except that it does not. The rationale is not set out: it is assumed, without explanation or justification, let alone justification in terms of the aims of the national park. That assumed rationale is this: the CNPA will accept the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) published projections for both population and housing in the Cairngorms National Park in 2010 and use them as the basis of its Local Development Plan.

However, those GROS figures for population and housing are projections – they are not predictions, and they are certainly not prescriptions. This is made clear, should there be any doubt, within the "Background Evidence 1 Housing and Population" paper, which states,

"The projections to the year 2033, are based on the estimated population of the Park in mid 2008 (the base year for the projections), are trend based, and do not take into account future policy."(para.3.4 p.10). Further, "They are informed by past trends and the scale of housing development that has occurred previously. The household projections should therefore be used to provide a general indication of how households within the Park may change over time." (para.4.2 p.14) [our emphases]

Those "past trends" are, of course, the history of what has happened in what is now the

Cairngorms National Park over the years up to 2008. As a rough guide to what happened in Badenoch and Strathspey compared to the rest of Highland the following information is from the 2001 Census:

(table supplied of % age change from 2001 census)

It will be noticed that Badenoch and Strathspey had the highest decadal population growth rate (at 6.86%) of any area in Highland from 1991-2001. This represents a doubling of population in less than a century and a growth rate greater than any other rural district in Scotland and is completely at odds with growth rates elsewhere in Europe within National Parks. It was that rapid, unsustainable, rate of growth in housing and population that gave rise to much of the impetus towards establishing the Cairngorms National Park, yet it is that large unsustainable trend in both population and housing growth that has contributed to the present GROS projections.

So, the situation is that the GROS projection, upon which the CNPA has based its housing need calculations within its MIR, is itself largely based on the rapid and unsustainable period of housing and population growth up to 2008. That period has already caused considerable damage to villages and aspects of the natural heritage in the land surrounding them. This was already evident in 1991, when the then Highland Regional Council, in its First Draft Local Plan stated (with reference to Badenoch and Strathspey):

“concern is emerging about the rate and scale of change in established villages. Unsympathetic cramming and expansion of communities is eroding their character and setting, threatening to overwhelm facilities, or creating imbalances in the social structure.”

Since that time, and up to the time used by GROS, the following numbers of new houses have been built in Badenoch and Strathspey, the great majority of which have been within and around those established villages (data from Highland Council):

(table supplied of number of houses built 1991 - 2008)

That, twenty years later, little of such concern or awareness as expressed by Highland Regional Council in 1991 is evident within the CNPA's MIR, is wholly unacceptable. Indeed, it appears that the CNPA has a history of simply not understanding the situation, or has tried deliberately to mislead the public on this issue, because in its 2007 Deposit Local Plan the CNPA stated, “For a variety of reasons, supply of new housing has been limited in the Cairngorms National Park area during the past five years. The limited supply of effective land has meant that, in Badenoch and Strathspey in particular, fewer homes have been built than were anticipated in the Development Plan.” (para.5.30 p.41, Deposit Local Plan 2007):

The truth is that the information in the above table shows that in the period 1991-2002 inc. the rate of house building averaged 82 per year (987/12) and increased to 133 per year (664/5) from 2003-2007, an increase of 62% in house building during the period in which the CNPA claimed that it was “limited”.

Similarly, the 2001 HC Structure Plan gave a target of 1050 houses for the first ten years of the period 1998-2017, ie 105 houses per year. That figure was exceeded by 27% during the period 2003-2007, the period in which the CNPA claimed that “fewer” homes had been built. The above CNPA statement is untrue.

That the CNPA should make these false statements about a matter of such importance to the people of Badenoch and Strathspey, and in the face of widespread concern about excessive development in the Cairngorms National Park, is wholly unacceptable.

Instead of using the GROS figures as a prescription of what must happen, the CNPA should use them correctly: as a warning of what likely will happen if present trends continue. As emphasised by the Reporters' to the Local Plan Inquiry Report - December 2009, in the context of considering the relevance of previous plans,

“there is no requirement for slavish compliance with any of [the] terms of these plans because they all predate the designation of the Cairngorms National Park, so that they contain policies and proposals that apply to areas with a different geographic focus and that are not based on the 4 National Park aims described above. In short, it is open to the CNPLP to take a different approach to that of the structure plans where the CNPP 2007 provides alternative material guidance or direction.”(para.1.8 p.2)

If there is no requirement for compliance with the terms of previous plans by the CNPA, how can there be any requirement to comply with the results of those former plans, namely the housing and population figures that provide the basis of the GROS projections, particularly when no evidence is forthcoming concerning the efficacy of those plans in improving the situation with respect to affordable housing for local people?

Similar considerations apply to the Housing Need Demands Assessments from the surrounding five local authorities. There is no requirement for the CNPA to adopt these figures. Indeed, how could it be otherwise? The Cairngorms National Park was established by statute as a special place, with the CNPA charged with the production of its development plan, which must comply with its National Park Plan and which must be in line with the four aims of the park. There is no requirement for the CNPA to follow slavishly the HNDAs of surrounding local authorities, any more than there is to follow their plans. Quite the opposite: the establishment of the Cairngorms National Park was supposed to herald a change in how things are done here, not to entrench a speculative housing bubble ever more firmly onto an already deeply stressed environment. In proposing to act this way, the CNPA is misdirecting itself.

Indeed, the above considerations are implicitly acknowledged by the CNPA since the Option 2 to “Focus all new development on the provision of affordable housing” would almost certainly mean that the GROS targets would not be met, yet that Option 2 clearly remains a possibility.

The Cairngorms Campaign supports Option 2 as a first step towards tackling this problem, but firmly believes that only the adoption of residency criteria, whereby all new-build housing is reserved for those with a national park connection (along the lines outlined in Policy 38d p.54 of the CNPA 2005 Consultative Draft Local Plan) will enable the CNPA to justly claim that it is making a determined attempt to achieve its statutory responsibilities with respect to the four aims of the park and the requirement to give greater weight to the first aim in the event of a conflict.

The crucial decision for the CNPA is whether to grasp this nettle now or to continue with something like business as usual, as Option 1 and 3 provide. If the CNPA takes the latter course the National Park will continue to suffer attrition of and damage to its natural and cultural heritage, until the evidence and local and national outrage becomes so overwhelming that it will be forced to change direction. That would be a disaster for the National Park and a disaster for the CNPA of historic proportions.

Question 5

The Cairngorms Campaign accepts the need for a settlement hierarchy as outlined in the MIR, and accepts that very nearly all development should occur within settlement boundaries.

However, in order for communities to be clear what they are likely to see in the future then it is also necessary for the settlement boundaries to be permanently established. Unless this is done the settlements will simply become centres of urban sprawl, with communities no more at ease with respect to changes in their environment than were development to be allowed elsewhere. For communities in settlements within a national park to be left witnessing an endless spectre of urban sprawl around them – which is what Options 1 and, even more so, Option 3 of Question 4 promises - is completely unacceptable.

In short, unless Option 1 of Question 5 includes a provision for making the settlement boundaries permanent, then any pretence that this measure would ensure that “communities are clear what they are likely to see in the future” is misleading and illusory.

For the avoidance of doubt, the acceptance by the Cairngorms Campaign of the need for a settlement hierarchy, should not be considered to have any implications with regard to the other policy approaches mentioned in this section, namely An Camas Mor, dualling of the A9 and IT developments.

MAIN SETTLEMENTS

All settlement maps.

We are concerned that the ENV allocations that appear in the adopted CNPLP do not exist in the MIR.

Similarly, the settlement boundaries that appear in the adopted CNPLP do not exist in the MIR. We regard it as appropriate to treat these as main issues. We note that housing allocations are being carried over from the CNPLP in MIR, but environment allocations are not.

We object to the presentation of the maps. The ED areas depict planned and existing development using the same symbol. This renders the maps uninformative, making it impossible for the public to establish the extent to which ED sites extend beyond existing development. The exact boundary of the H areas is impossible to determine from the maps. This does not allow the public, developers or the CNPA partners to check the exact accuracy of the maps in the MIR.

It is unhelpful that the H allocations are not numbered making it hard to refer to them individually. Meaningful consultation relies on effective sharing of information, which is not achieved in the presentation of these maps.

10.3 An Camas Mòr

10.3.2 We strongly object to this paragraph. We do not consider that ACM represents a ‘sustainable’ community and do not consider the CNPA has provided any reasonable justification for the view that it will prove to be ‘sustainable’. The CNPA gives the impression that they consider every other community in B&S has vulnerabilities in terms of sustainability. It would seem reasonable to consider that a new community would have greater vulnerability than established settlements. The established settlements of B&S have proven track records of sustaining themselves, some for over hundreds of years, and through many changes.

We object to statement that ACM ‘will meet growth demands over the next 20 years’. The CNPA has not justified why the ‘demand’ is a relevant consideration for the MIR.

We object to the statement asserting that ACM will provide a vibrant, balanced community. This appears to us to be aspirational and the CNPA does not provide a reasonable justification for

taking such a view. It is unclear why the CNPA considers that ACM will provide a demographically balanced community in the long term.

We object to the statement that ACM will set an outstanding example of what is possible in a National Park context. This vague statement is not supported by credible justification. We do not consider that ACM is an appropriate development in a National Park context.

10.3.6 There is no guarantee that ACM will provide a school or a full and active community.

Question 6

Do you agree with the preferred option?

No, the Cairngorms Campaign objects to all of the housing allocations associated with An Camas Mor, because of its conflict with all four Aims of the National Park. Such scale of development within a National Scenic Area and National Park, and so close to designated European Sites, is unacceptable and is destructive of outstanding environmental assets. The habitats impacted on and the outstanding biodiversity values of the site are features that the CNPA should be seeking to protect and enhance.

10.4 Aviemore

10.4.2 “ With up to 316 houses, on a variety of sites, having permission they will provide for the demand for new housing for the next plan period and beyond.”

We object to this sentence. The CNPA should not be seeking to meet the ‘demand for new housing’. The CNPA has not justified taking a ‘demand driven’ approach to housing.

10.4.3 We disagree that ‘capacity for some further growth remains on the land identified in the Local Plan.’ To build on this remaining land comes at a high environmental and social cost. Further, the CNPA has not properly identified limits to growth nor established where a balance lies between built development and retaining high quality environment and the amenities and benefits this provides.

ED1 and ED2. We strongly object to both these allocations:

ED1. The north end of ED1, beyond the boundary fence of the existing industrial units (Spey Valley Hire etc) is an area of semi natural and long established grassland, with some regenerating and established birch – classic Strathspey habitat and landscape. We find it incomprehensible that the CNPA considers it desirable to build industrial units on such a site. This is an area of high quality environment and is immediately adjacent to further extremely high quality habitats associated with the burn and surrounding woodland.

Two species of UK red listed vascular plants have been recorded on the site, one classed as endangered, the other as vulnerable. There would appear to be potential for both to extend. There is a significant assemblage of waxcaps (*Hygrocybe* species), > 6 species in one visit and including one PERL species. There are food-plants for some SBL butterfly species and the site would appear to be rich in invertebrates including bumblebees. In addition to a high density of rabbits (prey for EPS wildcat) there is evidence of use of the site by brown hare. The site provides foraging habitat for bats, and otter signs have been found near the site.

There are excellent views of the hills from the site, and the site is an important part of this high quality landscape.

Turning a superb piece of habitat for wildlife, landscape and recreation into an industrial unit conflicts with all four Aims of the Park.

Development would impact on the quality of experience for users of the Speyside Way and would degrade views for passengers on both railway lines.

We also consider this piece of land provides a buffer between the industrial site and the land to

the north.

The CNPA has provided no reasoned argument of how the loss of this ground is justified in terms of the level of economic growth that it would support with industrial development on it. The CNPA also does not provide an assessment of the economic value of this site as it is, compared to the economic value if it were industrialised.

ED2. We note that ED2 extends further south than a similar allocation in the HC B&S Local Plan. The southern, undeveloped part of this allocation is an important area of semi-natural habitat including grassland, heathland, birch, aspen, juniper and Scots pine. It is used by bats.

It is readily accessible to many people and provides a good area for informal recreation including bikes and dog walking for which it is currently used.

Its relatively quiet, secluded and natural character provides an area where people can experience a sense of 'getting away from it all' right in the heart of Aviemore. The CNPP 2007 and draft NPP emphasise the importance of wildness in the CNP. We consider that wild and natural qualities in the countryside are vital qualities that play a significant role in enjoyment of the countryside.

In a 'Park for all' the CNPA should be prioritising the retention of such areas in the environs of communities, so that people can experience relatively natural, unspoilt areas, getting away from it all and quiet solitude close to their homes, rather than this being an experience available only to those who can go to the remoter parts of the NP.

Further, these kinds of sites are important for all ages. The southern part of ED2 occupies a highly strategic position being close to the new primary school and accessible on foot from the school. It would provide a highly valuable outdoor educational area accessible within walking distance of the school. It is worth noting that the proximity of the present primary school to Milton Wood, a high quality environment, facilitates delivering a high quality of environmental education at present.

Outdoor education is increasingly emphasised in the Curriculum for Excellence. The CNPA is investing in promoting the CNP as an area for education, yet at the same time the CNPA appears blind to the value of this site for this very purpose. Such a mismatch fuels the considered opinion that the CNPA favours economic development over the environment and community interests.

The variety of habitats, their ecological high quality and relative naturalness, and the interesting features of ecological succession at this site, make it of outstanding value for environmental education. These features cannot be reproduced.

The cumulative impact of land use changes at Aviemore should be considered by the CNPA. In recent years the large area associated with the new golf course has been substantially lost for walking and the landscape has been significantly downgraded; the Achantoul burn area has acquired a far more suburban character with the new housing development of Lochan Mor and its landscape quality and views have been degraded; the site at High Burnside has been lost for recreation and the highly attractive partially wooded landscape and the course of the previously very natural burn it supported have been destroyed.

These present and future losses of areas of quality countryside are taking place alongside an

increased population, meaning that significantly more people are seeking access in a seriously diminished area of lower quality countryside. We consider this to be the opposite of what the CNPA was established to do, and runs counter to many statements in the CNPP which emphasise that the high standard of the environment is the fundamental quality for which the CNP was designated.

In short, we strongly object to all these housing allocations which conflict with all four Aims of the Park.

Question 7

Do you agree with the preferred option?

The Cairngorms Campaign does not agree with the preferred option. We do not consider that the MIR provides for the right amount of growth in Aviemore. We consider it provides for far too much housing and built development at the expense of valuable countryside.

10.6 Grantown-on-Spey

We object to the housing allocation. We are concerned that this would involve a loss and degradation of significant habitats and landscape qualities and that there has not been sufficient consideration given to the environmental costs of developing this site. This allocation jeopardises the viability of adjacent wetland habitat and has potential implications for the River Spey SAC and Anagach Woods SPA which should be assessed before any allocation is made. We are concerned that the Achnaganolin ED allocation is in very close proximity to habitats that are of high value for both landscape and biodiversity. We are concerned that the quality of such habitats should in no way be compromised by the industrial estate.

Question 9

Do you agree with the preferred option?

We do not agree with the preferred option (except in so far as it identifies no additional development land.)

10.7 Kingussie

We object to the east housing allocation which conflicts with all four Aims of the National Park. We do not consider the surveys undertaken are sufficient to establish the use of the site by European Protected Species. We consider the scale to be excessive. This allocation converts lowland agricultural land to built development. Such habitat contributes to the landscape quality

Question 10

Do you agree with the preferred option?

We do not support the preferred option. The MIR does not provide for the right amount of growth, but provides for an excessive amount of growth.

10.8 Newtonmore

We agree with the community view expressed in the MIR, that 'Small groupings of new dwellings are seen as the preferred way to provide for the need'. The MIR provides no reasoned justification for allocating large groupings of new dwellings.

The housing allocations convert lowland agricultural land to built development: a direct loss of lowland agricultural land. Such habitat in the CNP can support important biodiversity, e.g. brown hares and birds of UK conservation concern, and contributes to the landscape quality.

Question 11

Do you agree with the preferred option?

We do not agree with either the preferred option or the alternative option as we consider both options provide an excessive scale of housing.

We consider the alternative option is preferable to the preferred option because it promotes a smaller scale of development.

11 Other Settlements

11.3 'It [the MIR] focuses on those [other settlements] where there is greatest pressure for development.'

We object to this statement. We consider it gives a significantly exaggerated impression of the need for development and moreover the CNPA does not provide justification for any such "great" pressure. We do not believe any such great pressure exists.

11.5 Boat of Garten

We object to all housing allocations except on the old village hall site. We strongly support allocating this site for housing. The other housing allocations include habitats that support important biodiversity including invertebrate interest. We are concerned at the paucity of survey work at this stage and consider that such survey work needs to precede making allocations (e.g. due to conflict with the first Aim of the National Park). The south east housing allocation site would convert native Scots pine woodland into built development. It would provide an insecure housing boundary that it can be anticipated would lead to further loss of woodland to the west and south. The loss to housing of this site would drive increasing recreational disturbance further into the wood and into more sensitive parts of the wood with predictable adverse impacts on capercaillie, an Annex 1 species.

We are concerned that both of the westerly allocations provide insecure development boundaries that would be liable to lead to further housing development to the west and north and consequent further loss of habitat.

The combined allocations would represent a significant population increase in the village, with predictable increase in recreational disturbance to capercaillie in Boat Wood.

There is a muddle over whether the housing proposed is short term or short and medium term.

The map indicates it is all short 0-5 years; whereas the preferred option text states it is short and medium term.

Question 13

Do you agree with the preferred option?

We do not support the preferred option or the alternative option.

11.8 Carr-Bridge

We object to the housing allocations, which conflict with all four Aims of the park and represent excessive scale of development. The habitats impacted on, which include priority habitats, support significant biodiversity including priority species and Scottish Biodiversity List species. The European Protected Species wildcat may use the site and bats (also EPS) are known to use the site. Capercaillie are known to use the nearby woodland. This allocation would significantly increase the recreational disturbance in the surrounding woodland which can be reasonably predicted to impact on Natura interest.

Question 16

Do you agree with the preferred option?

We do not agree with the preferred option.

11.9 Cromdale

We object to the two medium and long term housing allocations which represent an excessive scale of development and a loss of lowland agricultural land. Such habitat in the CNP can support important biodiversity, e.g. brown hares and birds of UK conservation concern.

11.12 Dulnain Bridge

We object to housing allocations which represent an excessive scale and pace of development. The southern housing allocation would impact on Curr Wood which supports capercaillie and may support wildcat, a European Protected Species and would result in increased recreational disturbance in this wood. It does not provide a robust settlement boundary and would be liable to lead to further expansion of the settlement to the south west.

11.14 Kincaig

We object to housing allocation and to ED1, both of which conflict with all four Aims of the Park. The housing allocation represents a loss of lowland agricultural land. This contradicts targets in both National Park Plans 2007 and draft 2012.

The area of natural, native birch woodland within the site supports a rich ground layer and is of potential invertebrate interest. This is an extension of the woodland habitat that is on the other side of the railway line that is known to be of at least regional importance for its important invertebrate interest. For example, it supports the aspen-dependent flagship species *Hammarschmidtia*.

Assuming that the fenced area of birch within the housing allocation would not be directly built on (which would obviously destroy it), it would nevertheless be damaged as a result of a development through, inter alia, the spread of alien invasive species from gardens, lawn clippings and other garden waste being dumped, and other effects.

A development here would predictably increase recreational use of the woodland across the railway line, which would impact negatively on this important area e.g. through increased trampling effects of people and soil nutrient changes due to dogs.

The housing allocation adds a significant area of housing in the next 5 years, on top of the 28 houses recently built in Macbean Road, and further houses recently built nearer the community hall. This is an unsustainable and excessive scale and pace of development.

ED1 is partly natural deciduous woodland with birch and aspen, and a rich ground vegetation with heather and blaeberry. The site includes mature and regenerating aspen. Both National Park Plans aim to enhance aspen; to include the woodland area of the ED1 site contradicts this CNPP target.

The site is classic landscape with well spaced, native trees forming a very natural area of open woodland, interspersed with open rough grassland; it provides a valuable juxtaposition of these two habitats. The grassland includes Devil's Bit Scabious and Pignut, both plants that support specific Cairngorms invertebrates. This site provides continuity with the aspen and birch on both sides of the railway line and near the school. In a brief visit we recorded Song Thrush and Dunnock, both declining species.

Areas of natural woodland habitat are a particularly significant component of the Cairngorms straths landscape. Such areas are very attractive in the landscape, rich in biodiversity, and characteristic of the locality.

Close to the site a path from the access road underpass to the school provides a very attractive route both to the school and as part of several routes e.g. linking with the path opposite the school leading to the woods and Speybank. The development of this site would reduce the quality of experience of this path.

The development of this site would further impact on the adjacent burn, a tributary of the Spey. This burn would potentially be impacted on for the entire stretch from the H site through to this

one. It is likely to be used by otters, a qualifying feature of the Spey & Tributaries SAC.
Question 22

Do you agree with the preferred option?
We do not agree with the preferred option.

11.15 Nethy Bridge

We object to all the housing allocations which conflict with all four Aims of the Park and represent an excessive scale of development. We also object to the economic development allocation previously made in School Wood (adopted CNPLP), which conflicts with all four Aims of the Park. We are puzzled as to why the industrial development site is not distinguished on the map.

Question 23

Do you agree with the preferred option?
We disagree with the preferred option. We do not consider that built development should be allocated in an Ancient Woodland site.

Ref 62 Name Roy Turnbull

Response

My comments here are brief, since I fully endorse the responses put to you by the Cairngorms Campaign and the Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group.

I wish here merely to emphasise a few points:

- I am deeply disappointed with the Main Issues Report since it seeks to continue, indeed accelerate, the failed policies of the last twenty years or so that have caused such damage to the natural and cultural heritage and such disquiet amongst the communities of the now national park and its visitors. It proposes a completely inappropriate rate and amount of development for a national park and rides roughshod over the aims of the park that the CNPA are charged with implementing.
- Issue 1, Special Qualities: - As outlined in my response to the draft National Park Plan, the descriptions of the special qualities of the CNP are wholly inadequate. Indeed they appear, in their short, inexact and poetic nature to have been designed to make them completely useless when faced with the task of recognising, monitoring and protecting those special qualities. The possible reasons for the CNPA producing this kind of description of the special qualities are deeply disturbing.
- Issue 4, Housing/Affordable Housing: Question 4 - I do not support Options 1 and 3, both of which would continue the unsustainable and damaging provision of large quantities of open market housing within the national park. The preferred Option 3 is even worse than Option 1, since it allows an even greater proportion of open market housing.
- Nethy Bridge: Question 23 - I do not support the Option for housing or a business site in School Wood, which is an ancient woodland site. This allocation should be removed from the local plan. I support the recommendation of the reporters to the Local Plan Inquiry Report – December 2009 “we recommend that there should be a moratorium extending for the lifetime of the local plan on all housing and economic developments in Nethy Bridge, other than on windfall sites that already have detailed planning permission.” (para.66.24 p.315)

Ref 63 Name SEPA

Response

Thank you for your consultation regarding the Main Issues Report (MIR) for the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan (LDP) which we received on 19 September 2011. We welcome the opportunity to comment on this document which provides the basis for the new LDP for the Cairngorms National Park.

We have provided comments on the MIR in the attached appendices. Please note that we have only commented on the issues that fall within our remit. Appendix 1 comprises our responses to the questions raised within the MIR and Appendix 2 gives our detailed comments on the proposed individual allocations as requested in sections 10 and 11 of the MIR. Please note, although we make reference to the associated Environmental Report (ER) for the MIR, the detailed comments we have on the ER are provided in a separate response. The comments are also without prejudice to any further comments we may make on the Proposed Plan or further associated supplementary guidance.

If you require further details on any of the issues relating to our interests please refer to our development plan information sheets. These information sheets have been developed for planning authorities and provide information on the issues that we would expect to see covered in an LDP.

We note that the MIR does not contain any proposed policies in detail. As you know we welcome full and early engagement at all stages of the LDP, including the formulation of policies and supplementary guidance. As such we would welcome the opportunity to assist you in terms of providing comments on proposed text for future policies and supplementary guidance on issues relevant to our interests.

APPENDIX 1 – SEPA Response to the Cairngorms National Park Main Issues Report for the Local Development Plan (Appendix D)

Chapter 5 Issue 1- Special Qualities of the Park

1.1 We agree that the special qualities of the Cairngorms National Park (the Park), and their conservation and enhancement, is fundamental to the Local Development Plan (LDP) when considering where development might happen. We are pleased to note that a key consideration will be not just the impact of development has on these special qualities but also the cumulative impact it may have over time.

1.2 We are supportive of the preferred option 2 but in relation to the majority of our interests a clear framework of guidance comprising policies and supplementary guidance will be primary to ensuring the protection of the special qualities of the park.

Chapter 6 Issue 2- Resources

2.1 We support Option 3 as the preferred option. We acknowledge that there are many sensitivities and constraints to development within the national park area, and consider that inclusion of these issues within Option 3 is appropriate.

2.2 Whilst Option 3 will combine a policy based approach with spatial guidance, this approach appears to be confined to protecting resources and areas from development rather than positively identifying appropriate areas for development.

Water

2.3 We welcome the identification of water as a key natural resource. We agree that the

sustainable use of water and sustainable flood a management is an issue which is increasingly significant with climate change.

2.4 We support the carrying forward of the current Policy 12 Water Resources which is underpinned the existing supplementary guidance 'Water resources' and welcome the revisit of the supplementary guidance proposed in Chapter 15. We would very much welcome the opportunity to input into this revision.

2.5 With reference to Policy 12, while this policy will protect the water environment and prevent deterioration, we would expect to see a revised positive policy which will enable improvement. The existing Policies on Renewable Energy Generation, Developer Contributions and Open Space Provision are all linked to this issue, as all offer the opportunity to secure improvements in the water environment as part of development or open space provision.

2.6 We are also pleased to note that the supplementary guidance on Developer contributions will be revisited. It is key for the CNPA to commit to securing developer contributions in support of its 'responsible authority' duties to protect and improve the water environment and you may wish to refer to Stirling Council's PP5 Developer contributions policy as a good example of this. In relation to this we are currently identifying morphological opportunities that could potentially be taken forward in parallel with development proposals and we hope to make this available to planning authorities in early 2012.

2.7 Whilst we welcome the current 'encouragement' of the provision of buffer strips in the supplementary guidance we would welcome fuller buffer strip guidance such as that created by Aberdeenshire Council. The provision of buffer strips around or along water bodies is multi beneficial preventing potential pollution, improving water quality, reduce soil erosion and help adaptation to climate change and flood risk.

2.8 The current policy and supplementary guidance highlights that wetlands are encompassed within the water environment. We are currently compiling an inventory and GIS layer to show wetlands regulated as part of the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 and Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. Once this is available to planning authorities we recommend that this is included as one of the spatial layers used to guide development to the appropriate site.

2.9 Groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTE's) are a type of wetland that are specifically protected under the Water Framework Directive and on which we have produced specific guidance. We request that this is cross referenced in any revised water supplementary guidance and can be found in Appendix 2 of our Planning guidance on windfarm developments . It should be noted that it is applicable to all types of development. In summary development should be directed away from all wetlands where appropriate.

2.10 We note that the MIR has no allocations for new cemeteries or extensions to existing ones. The burial of corpses and their subsequent degradation may pose a risk to groundwater. Should there be a need for such allocations, we request that sites are fully assessed particularly in relation to groundwater before being included in the Proposed Plan. In so doing this will help ensure protection of existing groundwater resources and provide a positive spatial framework for such developments.

Climate change

2.11 As identified by the Adaptation Sub Committee of the UK Government a few weeks ago in

the report 'How well is Scotland Preparing for Climate Change', land use planning is a primary mechanism to help increase resilience to climate risks by ensuring future generations are not locked into a pathway that increases vulnerability or one that will be costly to maintain or reverse.

2.12 The management of carbon rich soils within the Park needs to ensure they remain as carbon sinks rather than becoming carbon sources. The identification of these soils on Map 2 (page 27) is welcomed and should be taken forward to the Proposed Plan in conjunction with a policy framework that ensures future developments do not cause irreversible damage to these areas.

2.13 A review of the policy framework including cumulative and sequential impacts would be welcomed. When reviewing the current policy framework any new policy should ensure renewable energy proposals are only supported where they can demonstrate that they will not have an unacceptable impact on carbon balance, soils and peatlands, the water environment, flood risk and air quality.

Waste

2.14 We welcome the positive attitude taken towards planning for waste, and the references to the Zero Waste Plan and the consideration of the impact the ZWP has on the LDP; in particular planning for the sustainable management of waste and the role the LDP will play in achieving the aims and vision of the Zero Waste Plan.

2.15 Whilst we support Option 3 as the preferred option, in relation to waste we recommend that some amendments are made in order to fully comply with the Zero Waste Plan requirements. We support the general approach contained within the existing Local Plan policies relating to waste (Policy 31 Waste Management and Policy 32 Landfill), however we consider that they should be updated in line with the Zero Waste Plan and with the recommendations contained below.

2.16 Paragraph 6.7 suggests that the LDP would deliver the ZWP by identifying sites to handle waste, and that viewing waste as a resource is fundamental to policy development and site identification. It is acknowledged that the LDP will provide a steer or direction to the waste planning authorities regarding planning for waste, but we recommend that this is undertaken in a more positive frame through identifying where it is appropriate for waste developments to be located within the National Park, giving a clearer and less ambiguous position. Scottish Planning Policy (paragraph 215) requires that "all development plans must identify appropriate locations for waste management facilities, allocating specific sites where possible and providing a policy framework which facilitates the development of these sites." In addition, it should be noted that Annex B of the ZWP requires all planning authorities to plan for all waste. We therefore recommend that Option 3 is amended to include a clear and positive spatial guidance relating to all waste, that works with the constraints and sensitivities that will also be identified under Option 3.

2.17 Under this framework, and in conjunction with Issue 3 "Support for Our Communities", we also recommend that all existing waste management facilities are protected with long-term provision made for the safeguarding of sites. We agree with the preferred option (Option 2) as this will enable our recommendations for Issue 2 to be fully realised.

2.18 We support the continuation of Design policy 16 ("Design Standards for Development") as contained within the 2010 Local Plan, with continued reference to the minimisation of waste, and "enabling the storage, segregation and collection of recyclable materials and make provision for

composting". The approach to minimise waste at construction and operational stages of all developments should be considered, and could be achieved by the requirement for a sustainable design statement or Site Waste Management Plan, and we recommend that reference is made to this approach within an amended Policy 16 and continued within the existing Sustainable Design supplementary guidance, updated to reflect the Zero Waste Plan.

Chapter 7 Issue 3 - Supporting our communities

Not directly relevant to SEPA

Chapter 8 Issue 4 - Affordable Housing

Not directly relevant to SEPA

Chapter 9 Issue 5 - Spatial Strategy

5.1 Whilst we have no strong objection to the preferred option being taken forward for the spatial strategy, we note that there is no indication within the MIR of any additional allocations for essential infrastructure such as new water treatment works, the A9 dualling, fire stations, nursing homes, schools, cemeteries etc. We strongly recommend that all types of development should be identified in the LDP maps wherever possible after thorough site analysis. In addition no new employment sites appear to have been identified even though many of the existing allocations may be constrained by flood risk. We recommend that the land required for employment use is reviewed to ensure adequate provision in light of possible flood risk constraints on existing sites.

5.2 We welcome the assessment of all the sites put forward for consideration within the Site Analysis Report. However we believe it would have been preferable to have included all the sites considered on the settlement maps for ease of comparison and assessment. Recent MIRs for Aberdeenshire and Argyll & Bute presented all sites under consideration on the maps which we consider to be good practice and transparent for the assessment and consultation process.

5.3 Whilst we acknowledge that it is important to set out development proposals which have permission already, there are a number of sites we have identified which have constraints of flood risk or hydromorphology that we may not have previously had the opportunity to comment on and identify these constraints in these areas, or new information has come forward since planning permission was granted. Should planning permission lapse on existing allocations we would welcome a review of the sites to ensure that they are still appropriate to either include in the Proposed Plan or to ensure the amount of proposed development e.g. number of dwellings proposed, can be accommodated on site without compromising the overall aims of the LDP.

5.4 Similarly we welcome the proposed removal of two existing allocations in Blair Atholl which through the assessment process were found to be wholly within the 1 in 200 Indicative Flood Map.

Chapter 10 Main Settlements

General comments

It should be noted that it has been very time consuming for consultees to assess the sites against all the Background evidence particularly when site references were not always consistent and sites were not listed in the settlement order adopted in the main MIR within the Site Analysis Report and Habitat reports.

It is noted from the Site Analysis part 1 methodology that a Phase 1 habitat survey of each site was undertaken. However these were not all available in the consultation documents available

for consultation. Where we have identified a potential issue which could be a constraint to development on the site we have highlighted this in Appendix 2. We would be happy to review any of the Phase 1 habitat surveys in relation to these sites and advise further on the exact wording that should be included within the settlement statement.

In terms of flood risk our Interim Position Statement on Planning and Flooding (July 2009), which can be found at http://www.sepa.org.uk/flooding/flood_risk_management.aspx states that if we can be satisfied that due weight has been given to flood risk throughout the Plan preparation then, once adopted, we will not revisit the principle of development on a site but will comment on the detail of the proposed execution where required.

So although a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has not been submitted, we are pleased to note that our Indicative Flood Map has been used in the assessment of site allocations within the Site Analysis Report. Whilst there are a significant number of sites where we have either confirmed or assessed that there is potentially a significant flood constraint (i.e. that not all the area within the site boundary will be available for development), we have not identified any preferred site that we are likely to object to on principle at this stage.

However it should be noted we have identified five of the non preferred sites and one single house site where we are unlikely to be in a position to accept the principle of development if taken forward in the Local Plan. It should be noted that most of these concur with your own assessment of flood risk and we have identified these sites in Sections 10 and 11 and within Appendix 2 below.

There does seem to be a number of discrepancies in the methodology applied for the site flood risk assessments particularly when assessing sites that lie partly within the 1 in 200 Indicative Flood Risk Map. When assessing the sites we have assessed them as follows: Red – wholly within or the majority (~60%) of the site lies within; Amber - adjacent to or part within (where some development could be accommodated on site – although no housing numbers are given in the MIR); and Green outwith.

If not already carried out, we would recommend that the CNP also consult the relevant Flood Prevention Officers who may have further information on local flooding issues. These staff may be able to provide specific information on the Flood Studies that have been carried out in appropriate locations.

We welcome the initial ecological assessments which have been undertaken to assess each of the potential allocation sites. It is noted from the Phase 1 habitats viewed that there are vegetation and soil indicators which imply the presence of wetlands on a number of the sites. We have noted this in the detailed comments in Appendix 2 and have indicated what further information will be required to identify the extent of the possible wetland constraint on the site. A NVC survey will be required in most cases and we request that this is highlighted as a requirement in the Proposed Plan text for the site in question along with the possible wetland constraint. We are likely to object to site allocations where the wetland constraint and requirement for further information is not highlighted.

What are the options for growth in An Camas Mor?

6.1 We agree that in light of the existing consents for An Camas Mor it is not considered reasonable to propose any alternative options and therefore agree with the preferred option. However, we are disappointed to note that no mention of the potential flood risk constraint to this preferred option has been included in the Background Evidence Report 4, Section 3. As stated

in the attached Appendix 2, we will object to this allocation unless the potential flood risk constraint is highlighted in the LDP and any associated supplementary guidance.

6.2 Although not shown on Map 6 of the MIR, we note from Section 3 of the Background Evidence Report 4 that land on either side of the River Spey may be allocated for recreation and leisure uses including a new foot/cycle bridge across the River Spey (Site 059 in Site Analysis Report). It should be noted that the FRA submitted for the An Camas Mor development did not include an assessment of any new foot/cycle bridge. Any masterplan will need to be accompanied by a detailed FRA not only for the new road crossing of the River Druie, which we have already requested, but also for the foot/cycle bridge which will need to demonstrate there will be no increase of flooding elsewhere. It should be noted that additional land may be required to provide mitigation such as compensatory storage. We request that this requirement is highlighted in the LDP and any associated supplementary guidance.

6.3 We agree with the flood risk assessments in the Site Analysis Report for the remaining non preferred sites around Coylumbridge and Inverdruie (030, 058b, 058c, 058e) and are not likely to object in terms of flood risk to any of these being taken forward to the Proposed Plan.

6.4 It should be noted that we have assessed site 058d as Red in terms of flood risk and are likely to object in principle to any planning application for housing on this site as the majority of the site is within the 1 in 200 fluvial flood extent of the River Druie.

What are the options for growth in Aviemore?

7.1 We have given detailed comments on the preferred site allocations shown on Map 7 in Appendix 2. Whilst we have assessed one sites (040) as having increased flood risk to that given in the Site Analysis Report, in summary we are not likely to object to these sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan if the relevant flood risk constraints associated with the allocations are highlighted in the LDP.

7.2 We agree with the Red flood risk assessment in the Site Analysis Report for the remaining site near Aviemore (010). We are likely to object in principle should this site be taken forward to the Proposed Plan as the majority of the site is within the 1 in 200 fluvial flood extent of the River Spey.

What are the options for growth in Ballater?

8.1 We have given detailed comments on the preferred site allocations shown on Map 8 in Appendix 2. In summary we will not object to these sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan if the relevant flood risk constraints associated with the allocations are highlighted in the LDP. However, we are disappointed to note that that no mention of the potential flood risk constraint to this preferred option has been included in the Background Evidence Report 4, Section 4. Avoiding development in areas of flood risk should be considered a major development principle for this settlement.

8.2 We agree with the remaining site flood risk assessments in the Site Analysis Report for the non preferred sites 004 and 035c near Ballater. In summary we are not likely to object to any of these sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan if the relevant flood risk constraints associated with them are highlighted in the LDP.

What are the options for growth in Grantown-on-Spey?

9.1 We have given detailed comments on the preferred site allocations shown on Map 9 in Appendix 2. In summary we are not likely to object to these sites being taken forward to the

Proposed Plan if the relevant flood risk constraints associated with the allocations are highlighted in the LDP.

9.2 Whilst we agree with the flood risk assessments in the Site Analysis Report for site 028, it should be noted we have assessed sites 12d and 12e as Amber rather than Green. In summary we are not likely to object to any of the non preferred sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan if the relevant flood risk constraints associated them are highlighted in the LDP.

What are the options for growth in Kingussie?

10.1 We have given detailed comments on the preferred site allocations shown on Map 10 in Appendix 2. In summary we are not likely to object to these sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan if the relevant flood risk constraints associated with the allocations are highlighted in the LDP.

10.2 Whilst we agree with the flood risk assessments in the Site Analysis Report for the non preferred site 020, it should be noted we have assessed site 001 as Amber rather than Green. In summary we are not likely to object to this site being taken forward to the Proposed Plan if the relevant flood risk constraints associated with the site are highlighted in the LDP.

What are the options for growth in Newtonmore?

11.1 We have given detailed comments on the preferred site allocations shown on Map 11 in Appendix 2. In summary we are not likely to object to these sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan if the relevant flood risk constraints associated with the allocations are highlighted in the LDP.

11.2 We note that no other sites were included in the Site Analysis Report for Newtonmore.

Chapter 11 Other Settlements

What are the options for growth in Blair Atholl?

12.1 We have given detailed comments on the preferred site allocations shown on Map 12 in Appendix 2. Whilst we have assessed one site (005e) as having increased flood risk to that given in the Site Analysis Report, in summary we are not likely to object to these sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan as long as the relevant flood risk constraints associated with the allocations are highlighted in the Proposed Plan. ED1 is wholly within the 1 in 200 Indicative Flood Map however due to operational reasons for the railway we are unlikely to object to development in principle on this site if it can be demonstrated that there will be no increased flood risk elsewhere.

12.2 We agree with the removal of the previously allocated Local Plan sites 054/005f and 056 from the preferred sites. The Highland Area Local Plan was adopted prior to our Indicative Flood Map being published and therefore these sites were not screened for flood risk at the time. As both sites lie wholly within the 1 in 200 fluvial flood extents of the River Tilt and River Garry, we will object in principle should either be taken forward to the Proposed Plan.

12.3 Whilst we agree with the flood risk assessments in the Site Analysis Report for the other non preferred sites 005b, 005c, 005d, and 019c, it should be noted we have assessed site 005g, 019b, and 019d as Amber rather than Green. In summary we are not likely to object to any of the non preferred sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan if the relevant flood risk constraints associated them are highlighted in the LDP.

What are the options for growth in Boat of Garten?

13.1 We have given detailed comments on the preferred site allocations shown on Map 13 in Appendix 2. In summary we are not likely to object to these sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan as long as the relevant flood risk constraints associated with the allocations are highlighted in the Proposed Plan.

13.2 Whilst we agree with the flood risk assessments in the Site Analysis Report for non preferred site 12j/017, it should be noted we have assessed site 002 as Amber rather than Green. In summary we are not likely to object to these sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan and recommend relevant flood risk constraints associated with the sites are highlighted in the LDP.

What are the options for growth in Braemar?

14.1 We have given detailed comments on the preferred site allocations shown on Map 14 in Appendix 2. Whilst we have assessed one site (031d) as having increased flood risk to that given in the Site Analysis Report, in summary we are not likely to object to these sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan as long as the relevant flood risk constraints associated with the allocations are highlighted in the Proposed Plan.

14.2 Whilst we agree with the flood risk assessments in the Site Analysis Report for the non preferred sites 031b, 031c, 031i, 031j, 035b, 035d, 035e, it should be noted we have assessed a two sites with increased flood risk (031e and 031f). However, in summary we are not likely to object to any of these non preferred sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan if the relevant flood risk constraints associated with them are highlighted in the LDP.

14.3 We have assessed the non preferred sites 031a and 031f as Red in terms of flood risk and are likely to object in principle to any planning application for housing on these sites as the majority of the site is within the 1 in 200 fluvial flood extent of the River Dee.

What are the options for growth in Bruar and Pitagowan?

15.1 We have given detailed comments on the preferred site 053 in Appendix 2. Whilst we have assessed it as having increased flood risk to that given in the Site Analysis Report, in summary we are not likely to object to these sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan but recommend the relevant flood risk constraints associated with the allocations are highlighted in the Proposed Plan.

15.2 Whilst we have assessed flood risk as Amber rather than Green for sites 005a and 005h, in summary we are not likely to object to any of the non preferred sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan but recommend relevant flood risk constraints associated with them are highlighted in the LDP.

What are the options for growth in Carr-Bridge?

16.1 We have given detailed comments on the preferred sites shown on Map 16 in Appendix 2. Whilst we have assessed one site (029a) as having increased flood risk to that given in the Site Analysis Report and agree with the Red assessment for 045, in summary we are not likely to not object to these sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan as long as the relevant flood risk constraints associated with the allocations are highlighted in the Proposed Plan.

16.2 Whilst we have assessed flood risk as Amber rather than Green for site 025, in summary we are not likely to object to this non preferred site being taken forward to the Proposed Plan and recommend relevant flood risk constraints associated with the site are highlighted in the LDP.

What are the options for growth in Cromdale?

17.1 We have given detailed comments on the preferred sites shown on Map 17 in Appendix 2. In summary we are not likely to object to these sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan as long as the relevant flood risk constraints associated with the allocations are highlighted in the Proposed Plan.

17.2 We agree with the flood risk assessment for the non preferred site 029b and are not likely to object to this non preferred site being taken forward to the Proposed Plan and recommend relevant flood risk constraints associated with the allocations are highlighted in the LDP.

17.3 We have assessed site 033 as Red in terms of flood risk and are likely to object to any planning application for housing on this site unless a detailed flood risk assessment is submitted as part the majority of the site is within the 1 in 200 fluvial flood extent of the Dallachappie Burn.

What are the options for growth in Dalwhinnie?

18.1 We have given detailed comments on the preferred sites shown on Map 18 in Appendix 2. Whilst we have assessed two sites (047 and 046) as having increased flood risk to that given in the Site Analysis Report, in summary we are not likely to object to these sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan as long as the relevant flood risk constraints associated with the allocations are highlighted in the Proposed Plan.

18.2 Whilst we have assessed flood risk as Amber rather than Green for site 027, in summary we are not likely to object to this non preferred site being taken forward to the Proposed Plan and recommend relevant flood risk constraints associated with the site are highlighted in the LDP.

What are the options for growth in Dinnet?

19.1 We have previously given comments on the proposed sites in Dinnet through pre-application discussions. It was highlighted then that any development would require connection to the existing public sewage system. It is our understanding from Scottish Water that there is currently capacity for less than houses in the current system. However, the current system comprises two septic tanks discharging to a large soakaway which has a history of failure.

19.2 As such we will object to any additional loading to the existing soakaway system in Dinnet. If any of the preferred or non preferred sites are taken forward in the LDP, we will object unless this foul drainage constraint is highlighted within the settlement statement. It should be made clear that development will be constrained until an upgrade of the existing system is undertaken and developer contributions may be necessary to remove this constraint.

19.3 In relation to our other interests, we have given detailed comments on the preferred sites shown on Map 19 in Appendix 2. Notwithstanding the above comments on foul drainage, in summary we are not likely to object to these sites being taken forward in terms of flood risk to the Proposed Plan as long as the relevant flood risk constraints associated with the allocations are highlighted in the Proposed Plan.

19.2 Similarly we are not likely to object to any of the non-preferred sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan in terms of flood risk.

What are the options for growth in Dulnain Bridge?

20.1 We have given detailed comments on the preferred sites shown on Map 20 in Appendix 2.

Whilst we have assessed one site (050) as having increased flood risk to that given in the Site Analysis Report, in summary we are not likely to object to these sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan but recommend the relevant flood risk constraints associated with site 050 are highlighted in the Proposed Plan.

20.2 Whilst we have assessed flood risk as Amber rather than Green for sites 012i and 034a, in summary we are not likely to object to any of the non-preferred sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan if the relevant flood risk constraints associated with the allocations are highlighted in the LDP.

What are the options for growth in Killiecrankie?

21.1 We have given detailed comments on the preferred sites shown on Map 21 in Appendix 2. Whilst we have assessed the ED1 site as Red in terms of flood risk, in summary we are not likely to object to these sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan as long as the relevant flood risk constraints associated with site 050 are highlighted in the Proposed Plan.

21.2 Whilst we have assessed flood risk as Amber rather than Green for site 064, in summary we are not likely to object to this non-preferred site being taken forward to the Proposed Plan but recommend the relevant flood risk constraints associated with the site is highlighted in the LDP.

What are the options for growth in Kincaig?

22.1 We have given detailed comments on the preferred sites shown on Map 22 in Appendix 2. Whilst we have assessed the ED1 site as Amber in terms of flood risk, in summary we are not likely to object to these sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan and recommend the relevant flood risk constraints associated with site 050 are highlighted in the Proposed Plan.

22.2 Whilst we have assessed flood risk as Amber rather than Green for sites 038a and 038c, in summary we are not likely to object to this non-preferred sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan but recommend the relevant flood risk constraints associated with them are highlighted in the LDP.

What are the options for growth in Nethy Bridge?

23.1 We have given detailed comments on the preferred sites shown on Map 23 in Appendix 2. Whilst we have assessed sites H2 and H3 as Amber in terms of flood risk, in summary we are not likely to object to these sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan and recommend the relevant flood risk constraints associated with site 050 are highlighted in the Proposed Plan.

23.2 Whilst we have assessed flood risk as Amber rather than Green for sites 003a, 006a, 018 in summary we are not likely to object to this non-preferred sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan if the relevant flood risk constraints associated with the them are highlighted in the LDP.

What are the options for growth in Tomintoul?

24.1 We have given detailed comments on the preferred sites shown on Map 24 in Appendix 2. Whilst we have assessed sites H3 and ED1 as Amber in terms of flood risk, in summary we are not likely to object to these sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan and recommend the relevant flood risk constraints associated with site 050 are highlighted in the Proposed Plan.

24.2 Whilst we have assessed flood risk as Amber rather than Green for sites 037e and 037f, in summary we are not likely to object to this non-preferred sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan and recommend the relevant flood risk constraints associated with them are

highlighted in the Proposed Plan.

Other non preferred sites within the Site Analysis Report

We have given detailed comments on the other non preferred sites in the Site Analysis Report which don't easily fit within the settlement headings considered above at the end of Appendix 2 attached. Whilst we have assessed a number of these as having increased flood risk to that in the Site Analysis Report, in summary we are not likely to object to any of these sites being taken forward to the Proposed Plan if the relevant flood risk constraints associated with the sites are highlighted in the LDP.

Chapter 12 Issue 6 – Support for Rural Areas

25.1 We support the preferred option 3. By restricting unacceptable development in the open countryside this will help to ensure development complies with our preference for foul drainage to connect to existing public foul drainage systems where practicable.

Chapter 13 Issue 7 – Connectivity and Communications

No comment. Not directly related to our interests.

Chapter 14 Issue 8 – Other Issues

27.1 Most of the general topics to be carried forward are not directly related to our interests. However as already highlighted in section 2.6 we would wish to see the Development Contributions topic enable, amongst other things, improvements to the water environment.

Chapter 15 Issue 9 – Supplementary Guidance

28.1 We welcome the range of topics that will be covered by supplementary guidance to support the Local Development Plan and are in agreement that the general direction of the current supplementary guidance is used as a starting point for the emerging guidance. We will be happy to be consulted at any stage on the proposed supplementary guidance that will be relevant to our interests.

28.2 We would particularly welcome additional supplementary guidance for site specific Development Briefs provide a good way of identifying both site specific constraints and environmental improvements that can be enabled very transparently.

(table supplied reviewing all sites submitted in call for sites based on Evidence Report)

Ref 64 Name Muckrach Estate

Response

We write on behalf of Muckrach Estate in relation to the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Main Issues Report ('MIR'). Muckrach Estate is fully committed to participating in the preparation of the Local Development Plan ('LDP') and welcomes the opportunity to comment on the MIR.

In particular we refer to the Issue 4 of the MIR specifically dealing with Housing/Affordable Housing.

The Muckrach Estate promoted a number of potential housing sites for allocation to the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan Call for Sites Consultation. These sites are listed below:

1) Ballintomb Wood (CNPA Ref 034a)

2) East of Ballintomb Wood (CNPA Ref 034b)

3) Braes of Muckrach (CNPA Ref 034c)

4) Wester laggan (CNPA Ref 034d)

The National Park Authority has not identified any of the above sites as preferred locations for residential allocation in the forthcoming Local Development Plan. We understand that the reason for this is based on the lack of an identified need for further housing in the village, with the development at the Dulnain Bridge Housing Site (H1) being brought forward for 30 units.

We were however pleased to note that the sites at Braes of Muckrach and Wester Laggan were identified as having potential for 1 - 2 houses as infill or housing group development.

The Main Issues Report recognises that housing, and in particular affordable housing for local people,

remains an important issue across the National Park. The Local Development Plan will therefore need to

promote sufficient housing sites to address this need. Whilst we recognise that the majority of housing at

Dulnain Bridge will be delivered through the identified preferred site, it is also necessary to recognise that

small housing proposals have a role to play in rural communities in delivering a mix of housing opportunities.

The preferred Option 3 of Issue 4 states:

"Support the needs of communities by ensuring all main and other settlements have some options for future development. Focus new housing on those sites already in adopted local Plans. On these sites, require a benchmark of 25 per cent affordable housing development."

Whilst we agree with Option 3 in part, that all main and other settlements should have some options for future development, we believe that existing local plan allocations should only be brought forward to the Local Development Plan where they are shown to be effective.

Additionally we feel that housing policy in the forthcoming Local Development Plan should reflect the role of small scale (1-5 units) housing development in delivering local housing need and providing a mix of options for the local housing market.

This should be delivered as part of a positive rural housing policy that promotes new housing development

within existing housing groups outwith existing settlements. Whilst providing a mix of housing types in the

National Park, small scale rural housing can also act as a driver for economic development.

Rural housing groups can accommodate small scale housing growth where the impact on the existing

housing group and the environment can be seen to be minimal. We ask that the National Park Authority

prepare a positive rural housing policy as part of the Proposed Plan. This should recognise the role of

housing groups, and the value linked to small scale expansion, both in terms of economic development and

the provision of rural housing.

Muckrach Estate welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development plan process. As a major

landowner around the settlement of Dulnain Bridge we would also welcome any further discussions with the authority relating to the long term strategic development of the village.

If you have any further queries relating to this representation, or the previous housing sites

promoted to the Call for Sites consultation, please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Ref 65 Name Ballater Housing Partnership

Response

10 Main Settlements- 10.5 Ballater- Paragraph 10.5.5

The option does not meet the local housing need. Discussions with Scotia have shown H1 wont have houses on it for a number of years. The housing need is not being met. The site size limits smaller building firms participating and the mechanism to provide affordable housing means that a large number of open market houses will be a by product and not applicable to any local need. Economic development could be stimulated by supporting smaller sites with a drive effort to provide affordable housing

The Ballater Housing Partnership does not agree with the preferred option as it is set out in Q4 because as we have found with the discussions on H1;

The economic climate is such that it is not viable to provide 25% affordable housing in the current development mix This mechanism even when it may work in the provision of affordable housing means that 75% more houses go up which far exceed any local demand. Therefor the village grows in a disjointed manner with a skewed demographic of retired and/or high value home owners

An option which the partnership would endorse is the direct identification and support for land for affordable homes.

The Partnership accepts that there will perhaps always be a need for new homes across a range of price brackets.

However 75% market value homes which are price driven by the developer is not appropriate to be the by-product of meeting the affordable housing need.

We don't agree with the premise of 'using the identified land in the current local plan to provide opportunities for housing and economic growth' for the following reasons.

The site has been allocated for 250 units. A development of this size or even phased will require an extensive master plan for the whole site. This master planning exercise is a costly obstacle before even planning consent can be sought.

The infrastructure for a site of this size is a considerable proportion of the cost of developing the site. This restricts what type of developer could undertake such a development, with limited opportunity for local businesses, builders, tradesmen, suppliers and so on to be involved.

The developer contributions element, as well as being a protracted process, for a site this size will be significant and limit the type of developer

These three points without any consideration of the current economic climate put a serious question on the ability of a developer to undertake the development of the site.

These are considerations about development in general but if you add the affordable housing obligation of 25-40% and you have a serious impediment to development.

Even if this mechanism for the provision of affordable housing alone, appeared appropriate, the outcome of 75% houses over and above the local need would not necessarily stimulate economic growth. Even the construction phase of developments of this magnitude would have limited economic growth for the area. Post construction, the new homeowners are quite likely to commute outside, work remotely or be retired or second home owners. This can cause a weighted shift in the demographic for the village which may be a negative impact. This is evident at the Dalfaber estate in Aviemore.

The Ballater Housing Partnership was formed under the Ballater One Voice Our Future process to look into

addressing the housing need of Ballater.

The present mechanism favoured by the National Park Authority for provision of affordable housing is not meeting the current demand by the HI development. Quite possibly it will not do so in the medium term. The housing need begins now and continues. Therefore the Housing Partnership highlight the need to identify land for affordable housing in addition to the land identified in the current local plan

Ref 66 Name Scottish Churches Rural Group

Response

1 Introduction - Paragraph 1.3

The Scottish Churches Rural group a group within ACTS welcomes the production of the main issues report.

We have separately commented on the National park plan but would endorse the wish to produce information about each of the principle centers of population within the Park. We particularly support the aim of improving communication with in the park area by improving the numbers of people with access to high speed broadband. We would emphasis the importance of the Churches as community bodies

Ref 67 Name Forestry Commission Scotland

Response

Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES) is the part of Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) which is responsible for the management of the national forest estate. It is responsible for managing 10 different forests/woodlands across three Forest Districts within the National Park, including areas such as the important woodlands as Cambus O'May, Glen Doll, Glenmore Forest Park, Inshriach, the Laggan woodlands and Pannanich. It welcomes the opportunity to comment on this document.

Issues 1, 3 & 5 Special Qualities of the Park, Supporting our Communities & Spatial Strategy
Forest Enterprise Scotland welcomes the inclusion of tourism as one of the strategic issues contained in draft National Park Plan and also the Local Plan Main Issues Report (MIR); therefore we are slightly surprised that tourism development, and in particular overnight accommodation provision, has not been included as a specific issue within the MIR. Such an approach could have allowed the consideration of a spatial approach to tourism development at both a large and a local scale which would have allow the development of a strategy to cover some areas outside the existing main settlements eg Glenmore. We believe that this is an omission given that the MIR notes this is an area of high intensity visitor pressure (Map 3) and also an area of high conservation importance (Maps 1b & 2). Neither is it entirely consistent with Policy Direction 6 (Provide high quality recreation opportunities) in the Draft National Park Plan which advocates the identification of 'areas of need for particular co-ordination and visitor management and establish collaborative management approaches across land ownership/business boundaries'.

Forest Enterprise Scotland believes that to ensure that the special qualities of Glenmore Forest Park, which includes significant areas under conservation designation, are maintained and enhanced that there is a need to develop a spatial strategy which will help guide the future development of the built infrastructure of the Glenmore area. This will be able to build upon the early work which was done through the Draft Management Strategy for the Cairngorm, Rothiemurchus and Glenmore area (the CRAGG Strategy). This might be done through the inclusion of Glenmore as one of the Settlements included in the Local Plan, or perhaps through

the development of a Masterplan for the area.

Forest Enterprise Scotland is willing to work with partner organisations and the local community in the development of a spatial strategy for the Glenmore area. It is envisaged that such a piece of work would seek to address a range of issues in the Forest Park

- integration of the forest plan and the conservation of the special qualities of the area with the built environment of the village and the management of visitors
- ensuring that the visitor experience is enhanced
- the development of a culture that the surrounding area is special which induces appropriate behaviour from all visitors
- ameliorating factors which detract from the visitor experience eg transport & car-parking (Issue 7)
- reviewing the range of accommodation facilities provided to ensure that there is provision for all and this is appropriately situated (Other issues – tourism related development).

Given this desired direction of travel, Forest Enterprise Scotland supports Option 2 (the preferred approach) for issues 1 (Special Qualities) and 3 (Supporting our communities) and also supports the preferred option for Issue 5 (Spatial Strategy) and is willing to work with the Cairngorms National Park, and the local community, in the development of such an approach for the Glenmore area.

Forest Enterprise Scotland notes the information contained in maps 1a & 1b. We suggest that it may be appropriate to scrutinise some of the fine-scale detail of these maps as they be based on historical information which do not fully take into account recent management of certain woodlands. It is acknowledged that the scale of this map is large and therefore our ability to interpret them is limited, but this issue may be of importance in due course when considering progress against the NP Plan targets.

Issue 7 Connectivity & Communication

FES agrees with Option 2, recognising that there are specific transport and parking issues within Glenmore area (as outlined above) which will be addressed by the preferred approach.

Given the importance of tourism related development to the Glenmore area, Forest Enterprise Scotland is fully supportive of the inclusion of this subject within the other issues covered by the Local Development Plan (Q27). We feel that the spatial approach which we have suggested above may have some value to ensure that an appropriate balance between conservation of the special qualities of the NP and the development of tourism related development is maintained, thus securing the delivery of the National Park Aims.

Forest Enterprise Scotland hopes that the Cairngorms National Park Authority will be able to adopt the suggestions made in this submission and, if so, look forward to working in partnership to deliver them.

Ref 68 Name Aberdeen City & Shire SDP Authority

Response

The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan was only adopted in October 2010 but the CNPA is keen to prepare a replacement local development plan as soon as possible and in tandem with the National Park Plan. The Main Issues Report (<http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/park-authority/planning/local-plan/main-issues-report-consultation>) identifies seven broad planning

issues facing the National Park:

- Special Qualities of the Park
- Resources / Reducing our Consumption
- Support for our Communities
- Housing / Affordable Housing
- Spatial Strategy
- Support for our Rural Areas
- Connectivity and Communications

Response

The Main Issues Report does not raise any additional topics worthy of a response from the SDPA beyond those already highlighted in response to the Draft National Park Plan. However, most of the issues raised relate to both documents.

Ref 69 Name Sportscotland

Response

sportscotland is the national agency for sport in Scotland. Our vision is of a Scotland where sport is a way of life. Our goals are to increase participation and improve performance in sport and to create a world class sporting system.

Our comments on the draft MIR focus on the outdoor and adventure component of sport, defined as those sports which use, are attracted to and dependent on Scotland's natural outdoor environment for their practice. A greater and more integrated role for outdoor and adventure sport is identified as a key success measure in our corporate plan. We also make specific reference to policy on sport facilities and pitches.

It will be useful to read our response in tandem with the comments we have made on the draft National Park Plan. These set the context for the comments that we make below. In particular it will be useful to be aware of our support for achieving national park aims in a collective and coordinated way. While we recognise the primacy of conservation in situations of conflict, we agree with paragraph 1.8 of the MIR that this should not be translated as a priority for conservation in the national park. We support the principle of delivering multiple benefits, of which we consider enjoyment of the outdoors to be one; and that recreation (including sport) in the form of enjoying the national park, is one of the special qualities of the national park. Our response to the National Park Plan also outlines our position on wild land and on the need for an evidence based approach to the management and planning of outdoor sport and recreation.

We note and support the point made in paragraph 5.2 of the MIR that special qualities are at the heart of everything that happens in the national park. We support the specific reference to recreation in Table 1 of the MIR and its contribution to the special landscape qualities of the park. We agree with paragraph 5.11 that the protection and enhancement of the park's special qualities will be a key objective of the development plan.

We support the strategic objectives outlined in section 4.4 of the MIR and in particular objective 3 on delivering an outstanding visitor experience.

Question 1 - Special Qualities

sportscotland supports the preferred approach, subject to the following comments:

- We consider it important to appreciate that designated sites can be developed. It is important not to assume that development will necessarily impact on designated sites or impact unacceptably and sportscotland strongly urges an evidence based approach to understanding impacts on the natural heritage. We are supportive of the need to guide development away from the sites identified on Map 1 b, however, as we comment above, it is important that development decisions are based on a full understanding of actual rather than assumed impacts and to appreciate that some designated sites may be able to accommodate some development, especially where impacts can be mitigated against.
- sportscotland agrees with the need to protect wild land qualities and recognises the zones outlined on Map 1 a. Wild land is of particular importance for outdoor and adventure sport and a quality we support the retention of.

In relation to the above two points we consider that the text in the MIR should be clear that guiding development to the appropriate site does not necessarily mean that development will not be allowed on the sites identified in Map 1 b and indeed that in relation to Map 1 a it is only the core wild land areas or development that will impinge on core areas, where development will be resisted.

sportscotland seeks to be consulted on the additional spatial guidance proposed. In particular we want to ensure that the landscape component addresses the need to protect special recreation qualities, as identified in Table 1.

Question 2 - Resources

The comments we have made in response to question 1 on designated sites are also applicable to the preferred approach to Issue 2 on Resources and its associated Map 2 on natural resources and protected areas. We strongly agree with the need to protect the park's special qualities but it is important that this is achieved through a balanced and evidence based approach.

sportscotland notes that there is no reference to the precautionary principle in the MIR.

sportscotland supports the advice on the precautionary principle set out in paragraph 132 of the Scottish Planning Policy and in particular the advice that the precautionary principle should not be used to unnecessarily impede development and that where the principle is applied, i.e. on the basis of uncertainty, research should be commissioned to remove that uncertainty. Section 3.4 of our policy document on sport and recreation in the outdoors Out There <http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/ChannelNavigation/Topics/TopicNavigation/Sport+in+the+outdoors/Out+there/> sets out our own position on the precautionary principle which it will be useful for the park to be aware of.

sportscotland notes from Maps 1 a and 1 b and from Map 2 that no clear sensitivity is identified for outdoor and adventure sport interests in the park. Sportscotland considers this would be difficult to do on a map basis and we are not necessarily in favour of a site based approach to the protection of outdoor and adventure sport interests. We do however consider it important that there is policy protection for

OAS interests in the park. To this end we request that a specific policy is included in the plan that stresses the importance of OAS, highlighting it as a special quality and its promotion as a key aim of national parks, and that such interests should be protected from inappropriate development. The Scottish Planning Policy is clear in paragraph 125 that enjoyment of the natural heritage is one of the Government's national outcomes and that planning authorities should support opportunities for enjoyment of the natural heritage. Paragraph 149 is more explicit stating that planning authorities should support, protect and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities. On this basis sportscotland considers that a discrete policy is merited.

Question 3 - Supporting Our Communities

sportscotland supports the preferred approach but considers it important to also look at how existing facilities and resources within settlements can be protected. This would include the protection of open spaces as identified as part of an open space strategy, including any networks that connect open spaces. Open spaces can provide important places for formal and informal sport and recreation and it is important that any policy protecting open space recognises this specific role.

sportscotland has a statutory role in the protection of sport pitches and looks to planning authorities to establish a policy with this specific remit. Such a policy should state the circumstances under which a playing field can be developed, as outlined in paragraph 156 of the SPP.

The production of a playing field strategy is also recommended in order to gauge the demand for sports pitches within the each settlement. Indoor sport facility requirements are considered through sports facility strategies. Local authorities are actively encouraged to produce both pitch and facility strategies for their area. In this respect it would be worthwhile for the national park to be aware of analysis which has been carried out by the respective local authorities in the national park. Most local authorities have completed some form of analysis with sportscotland recently, and the conclusions and recommendations can help identify community sporting needs.

Question 25- support for rural communities

sportscotland supports the recognition made in paragraph 12.2 of the Scottish Government's support for diversification in rural areas including for development linked to tourism and farm diversification. It is important to appreciate the contribution that outdoor and adventure sport can make to these sectors; outdoor recreation is often the basis for much of the Scottish tourism product and even more so in a place like the Cairngorms. To this end sportscotland would like to see policy that took a positive approach to outdoor and adventure sport development in the national park. In addition, we consider that it would be useful to include a definition of tourism development in the plan that made it clear that this includes outdoor and adventure sport.

In relation to policy in this area it is important to note the advice of paragraph 45 of the SPP which states that planning authorities should respond to the diverse needs and locational requirements of different sectors. Outdoor sport developments, such as mountain bike trials, outdoor centres, equestrian centres or boat storage facilities can all have specific locational needs based on the natural resources they are dependent on. It is important that policy in the development plan is flexible enough to allow these forms of development to take place.

Question 26 - Connectivity and Communications

sportscotland supports the preferred approach and in particular the requirement for developers to contribute to existing and new routes. In addition, it will be important for policy in this area to protect access rights. Para 150 of the SPP is clear that development plans should protect core paths and other important routes. It is important for policy to protect all important access routes and not just core paths

and to ensure that it is not just paths but all important routes (e.g. those on water) that are protected. In addition sportscotland encourages the park to be willing to refuse development where important routes will be significantly impacted upon and where this impact cannot be satisfactorily mitigated against. We consider this especially important in a national park where the promotion of enjoyment is one of the key aims.

In taking new residential development sites forward in the park it will be important that the proposed development plan includes policy on the design and layout of new residential development. It is important for housing development to provide for walking and cycling and to link up with existing path networks that may exist. New paths should be developed with multi use as their starting point.

Question 28 - Supplementary Guidance

sportscotland seeks to be consulted on the development of proposed SPGs on water resources, landscape, use of resources, natural heritage and core paths.

Other Comment

In relation to any policy that is developed or taken forward on renewable energy, minerals, waste, and telecoms, it is important that it, or they, comply with the advice of the SPP on the need to take recreation interests into account. If, however, there is an overarching policy protecting outdoor and adventure sport interests, as we have recommended above, this will negate the need for specific criteria to be included across the range of policy areas that could impact on outdoor and adventure sports.

Ref 70 Name The Crown Estate

Response

Question 2

Issue 2 – Resources

This representation is made on behalf of The Crown Estate.

We are in favour of the preferred option to combine a policy based approach with clear spatial guidance identifying sensitivities and opportunities, provided that policies allow for flexibility in development within the Park as the current approach allows, whilst also providing clarity on the opportunities and sensitivities to development.

However, we believe that the Main Issues Report does not go far enough to encourage renewable energy development within the Park. Capacity studies should be carried out to ascertain the suitability of potential renewable energy development within the Park. We particularly encourage a policy promoting development of small-scale renewables development within the Park, in line with the Park's proposals to increase sustainability and reduce resource consumption.

It is difficult to comment in detail on the proposed policy direction for resources and reducing consumption as the MIR is very broad and does not contain any details of key policies. As such, we would request that an interim consultation is carried out by CNPA prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan to allow interested parties to comment on more detailed proposals for rural areas before they are set out in the Proposed Plan. This is an approach that Dumfries & Galloway Council and Stirling Council are both approaching in the coming months, and we consider that this would be the most appropriate course of action for CNPA also. We do not wish to be in the position of objecting to large sections of the Proposed Plan on behalf of The Crown Estate, and therefore consider that further consultation prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan would benefit both our client and CNPA, by allowing us to comment on details of key policies.

Question 3

Issue 3 – Supporting our Communities

This representation is made on behalf of The Crown Estate.

We will support policies within the Local Development Plan which encourage opportunities for economic development and therefore agree with the preferred approach within Issue 3 of the MIR. Given the significant economic challenges of communities in these remote rural areas within the Park, policies must be developed which are open and flexible to all opportunities for economic development and tourism coming forward within the Park.

It is difficult to comment in detail on the proposed policy direction for economic development and reducing consumption as the MIR is very broad and does not contain any details of key policies. As such, we would request that an interim consultation is carried out by CNPA prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan to allow interested parties to comment on more detailed proposals for rural areas before they are set out in the Proposed Plan. This is an approach that Dumfries & Galloway Council and Stirling Council are both approaching in the coming months, and we consider that this would be the most appropriate course of action for CNPA also. We do not wish to be in the position of objecting to large sections of the Proposed Plan on behalf of The Crown Estate, and therefore consider that further consultation prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan would benefit both our client and CNPA, by allowing us to comment on details of key policies.

Question 4

Issue 4 – Affordable Housing

This representation is made on behalf of The Crown Estate.

The title of this Issue as “Affordable Housing” is partly ambiguous and misleading. The Issue seems to relate to the housing spatial strategy for the Park, not just affordable housing. As such, some of the text within the Options is unclear and ambiguous as to whether it relates to open market housing or affordable housing.

We agree with the statement in Paragraph 8.2 recognising housing as a remaining important issue across the Park. With regard to the policy approach for affordable housing within the Park, we support the recognition that affordable housing policy should be amended in line with the national benchmark instead of sitting above this level.

We would encourage a flexible affordable housing policy which accounts for the varying situation with housing development across the Park. In addition, we would seek to include a flexibility of approach to the delivery of different tenures of affordable housing, recognising that the traditional social landlord provision may not be viable in all circumstances. Policy should positively encourage housing development in all rural areas, in line with Scottish Planning Policy, and be flexible enough that the affordable element of a housing scheme does not render the development unviable. Delivery of development, and in particular housing for residents and workers within the Park is key in this economic climate.

In terms of open market housing, it is important that policy does not restrict the deliverability of development. Focussing new housing on sites already adopted in Local Plans may restrict development which is viable in the plan period. Additionally, there has been insufficient choice of development sites for settlements in Local Plan allocations, and carrying these forward without identifying further sites for potential development may stranglehold development in settlements where there is only one proposed development site.

It is difficult to comment in detail on the proposed policy direction for affordable housing as the MIR is very broad and does not contain any details of key policies. As such, we would request that an interim consultation is carried out by CNPA prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan to allow interested parties to comment on more detailed proposals for affordable housing before they are set out in the Proposed Plan. This is an approach that Dumfries & Galloway Council and Stirling Council are both approaching in the coming months, and we consider that this would be the most appropriate course of action for CNPA also. We do not wish to be in the position of objecting to large sections of the Proposed Plan on behalf of The Crown Estate, and therefore consider that further consultation prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan would

benefit both our client and CNPA, by allowing us to comment on details of key housing policies.

Question 24 – Spatial Strategy – Tomintoul

This representation is made on behalf of The Crown Estate.

We support the Masterplanning process for the village of Tomintoul to achieve a more innovative and appropriate response to the form of the settlement and inform future development. However, greater clarity should be given within the text of the Plan regarding timescales for future consideration of options coming out of the Masterplanning process and consultation with the community. Paragraph 11.16.2 states that “Should further options come out from consultation with the community, via the Masterplan exercise, these may be considered in the future”, which offers no detail of timescales.

Whilst we will support the final Masterplan findings, and encourage development for the village which follows the Masterplan recommendations, we acknowledge that the MIR sets out sites for housing and economic development based on the information currently available, as it is premature to rely on the Masterplan which has not yet been completed.

We therefore have the following comments on the MIR proposals for Tomintoul. The Crown Estate is the major landowner of the land surrounding the current extent of the village of Tomintoul, and consequently has a significant interest in the land use proposals for the village. There is currently no information on the number of units that could be supported by each site. Greater clarity on unit numbers should be given within the text of the Plan to allow for a more comprehensive view of the intentions of the CNPA for the village development.

We acknowledge the allocation of housing sites ('H') which are consented or pending, which will meet the demand for housing in the short-term; however we question the sequence of other allocations. From the text at Paragraph 11.16.6, the MIR seems to suggest that H2 and H3 (medium term allocations 6-10 years) will not be permitted unless development at “the initial phase with consent” is complete. There is ambiguity here as to which allocations are being referred to. We encourage a more flexible approach to the delivery of housing allocations in Tomintoul to account for the deliverability of different sites at different times. Where one site may be deliverable in the short term, this development may be significantly delayed by another site which will not come forward in the short term due to a number of potential issues. In addition, although there is mention of sites H2 and H3 within the text, there is no indication of whether site H1 could be brought forward prior to the completion of development already permitted at sites H. There is also no mention of site H4 and any restrictions or flexibility with this allocation.

Further clarity should be added to policies for the village of Tomintoul to rectify the current ambiguity and the Plan should allow for flexibility in the sequence of which sites are brought forward for delivery, particularly considering the current economic climate, and in line with Scottish Planning Policy's desire (at Paragraph 92) to “enable development in all rural areas which supports prosperous and sustainable communities whilst protecting and enhancing environmental quality”.

Question 25

Issue 6 - Support for Rural Areas

This representation is made on behalf of The Crown Estate.

Policy Approach

We will support policy for rural areas which positively encourages sustainable economic growth in rural areas. Policy which allows for flexibility and which is in line with Scottish Planning Policy's desire in Para 92) to “enable development in all rural areas which supports prosperous and sustainable communities whilst protecting and enhancing environmental quality.”

The preferred approach seems to suggest that CNPA will set out policies which will allow for different approaches in different communities. We support this approach and recognise that

the character of rural areas differs from area to area across the Park, and a blanket approach will not be beneficial to allowing maximum flexibility and a positive approach to rural development.

We also support the approach of allowing development in areas “where previously dispersed development has determined character” and we would further support policy resulting from this approach which allows appropriate development in rural areas.

With regard to the approach of restricting “inappropriate development” in the open countryside, we request that further clarification is provided as to the definition of “inappropriate development” and the policy implications for this classification within the Plan. The preferred Option suggests that growth should “match historic growth patterns”. This focuses on the quantity not layout of growth. We suggest amending the wording to state “settlement” instead of “growth” to be less contradictory to the remainder of the MIR text and policy approach.

It is difficult to comment in detail on the proposed policy direction for rural areas as the MIR is very broad and does not contain any details of key policies. As such, we would request that an interim consultation is carried out by CNPA prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan to allow interested parties to comment on more detailed proposals for rural areas before they are set out in the Proposed Plan. This is an approach that Dumfries & Galloway Council and Stirling Council are both approaching in the coming months, and we consider that this would be the most appropriate course of action for CNPA also. We do not wish to be in the position of objecting to large sections of the Proposed Plan on behalf of The Crown Estate, and therefore consider that further consultation prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan would benefit both our client and CNPA, by allowing us to comment on details of key rural policies.

Small Building Groups

Policy 21 of the adopted Cairngorms Local Plan allows for development of new housing within existing rural building groups in appropriate locations. We request that a similar policy is carried over to the LDP, allowing for a robust and clear policy position on the acceptability of development within rural building groups, and general site principles for proposed developments.

Scottish Planning Policy states (in Para 94) that “Development plans should support more opportunities for small scale housing development in all rural areas, including new clusters and groups, extensions to existing clusters and groups, replacement housing, plots on which to build individually designed houses, holiday homes and new build or conversion housing which is linked to rural businesses or would support the formation of new businesses by providing funding.” We are therefore keen to see the LDP adopt the approach of the Scottish Government and give increased support for small scale housing development in “all” rural areas.

It is not our intention to erode the open countryside or promote unacceptable housing development within rural areas, but to promote a flexible housing policy for rural building groups which takes into consideration the pressures to provide appropriate housing for people living and working within the Park.

The current adopted Local Plan Policy 21 defines a rural building group as “three or more occupied dwellings”. We consider that this policy could be less restrictive and account for instances where there may only be two occupied dwellings, but there are also several other buildings which would form part of a cohesive group, as per Perth & Kinross Council policy. An amendment to the wording of this policy would allow for further reinforcement and enhancement of dispersed small settlements and housing groups within the Park.

Enabling Development

In addition to a flexible policy on rural housing, we request that a policy is included within the LDP focussing on enabling development to fund restoration of listed properties and in some case, to support the development of rural enterprises. A number of other planning authorities

in Scotland utilise an enabling development policy, which allows for the delivery of appropriate development to support the restoration and regeneration of listed buildings and other structures and to support rural development.

Within East Lothian Council's adopted Local Plan (2008), Policy DC1 Development in the Countryside and Undeveloped Coast part 1c contains wording which we would support and encourage for inclusion in the Cairngorms LDP – "Enabling development may [...] be acceptable where it will fund the restoration of a listed building or other significant feature of the built or natural environment, the retention of which is desirable." We would encourage a positive policy to allow enabling development to fund the restoration of listed buildings, and acknowledge that this development should not harm the setting of the listed building. In addition, the East Lothian Council example goes on to confirm that "where housing is acceptable on the grounds of enabling development it will not require to provide affordable housing" which we also support.

For business and tourism development, an enabling policy would also be beneficial to allow maximum flexibility and encourage economic development within the Park. East Lothian Council's policy DC1 part 1c also relates to this and states "In the case of an employment, tourism or leisure use, an element of new build housing may be acceptable as enabling development where the Council is satisfied that (i) the wider public benefits of securing the primary use outweigh the normal policy presumption against new build housing in the countryside, and (ii) the enabling development is essential...".

Enabling development within the Park to support the restoration of listed buildings and to support tourism and business development could release and encourage economic activity within the park, and also support the protection of buildings with a high heritage value.

General Housing in the Countryside Policies

We support the policy approach within Scottish Planning Policy on housing in the countryside which states:

"94. The requirement for development plans to allocate a generous supply of land to meet housing

requirements, including for affordable housing, applies equally to rural and urban areas.

Development

plans should support more opportunities for small scale housing development in all rural areas, including

new clusters and groups, extensions to existing clusters and groups, replacement housing, plots on which

to build individually designed houses, holiday homes and new build or conversion housing which is linked

to rural businesses or would support the formation of new businesses by providing funding.

Opportunities

to replace rundown housing and steadings, and to provide limited new housing along with converted

rehabilitated buildings, should be supported where the new development is designed to fit in the landscape setting and will result a cohesive grouping. Modernisation and steadying conversion should not

be constrained within the original footprint or height limit unless there are compelling design or conservation reasons for doing so.

95. The aim is not to see small settlements lose their identity nor to suburbanise the Scottish countryside

but to maintain and improve the viability of communities and to support rural businesses. In more accessible and densely populated rural areas most new development should be in or adjacent to settlements. In less populated areas, small scale housing and other development which supports diversification and other opportunities for sustainable economic growth whilst respecting and

protecting

the natural and cultural heritage should be supported in a range of locations. In these areas, new housing

outwith existing settlements may have a part to play in economic regeneration and environmental renewal. All new development should respond to the specific local character of the location, fit in the

landscape and seek to achieve high design and environmental standards, particularly in relation to energy

efficiency. Planning authorities should apply proportionate standards to access roads to enable small

developments to remain viable.”

We encourage the development of policies which continue to ensure that the Plan respects these key policies, particularly given the remote rural nature of the Park area.

Question 27 – Other Issues

This representation is made on behalf of The Crown Estate.

The introductory page to the Main Issues Report (MIR) states that the MIR “sets out choices for the land allocations that could be made for development, and for policies that the CNPA and its constituent local authorities will use to make decisions on applications for planning permission”.

Whilst covering the relevant main issues within the Park which must be covered by the Local Development Plan (LDP), we do not consider that the MIR goes far enough within each issue to propose any options for specific policies. The MIR is very broad and only covers the general direction that policy under each issue will cover. It gives no indication as to whether policies from the adopted Cairngorms Local Plan will be considered and brought forward to the LDP, or instances where policies may be changed considerably or dropped altogether from the LDP. From our experience of making representations to Main Issues Reports, this MIR falls short of giving assurance that issues which are of particular importance to our clients will be considered and included in the LDP.

We therefore request that an interim consultation is carried out by CNPA prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan to allow interested parties to comment on more detailed proposals before they are set out in the Proposed Plan. This is an approach that Dumfries & Galloway Council and Stirling Council are both approaching in the coming months, and we consider that this would be the most appropriate course of action for CNPA also.

We do not wish to be in the position of objecting to large sections of the Proposed Plan on behalf of The Crown Estate, and therefore consider that further consultation prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan would benefit both our client and CNPA, by allowing us to comment on details of key policies.

Question 28 – Supplementary Guidance

This representation is made on behalf of The Crown Estate.

Of specific relevance and importance to The Crown Estate is the Supplementary Planning Guidance on “Housing Development in Rural Building Groups”. We agree with the proposal to use the direction given in the current supplementary guidance as a starting point to revisit the range of guidance, particularly with Housing Development in Rural Building Groups.

Scottish Planning Policy states (in para 19) that supplementary guidance should be “derived from the plan” and be “the subject of discussion and engagement”. We therefore request and expect that the range of supplementary guidance published by CNPA will reflect the policies within the Local Development Plan and allow for a period of public engagement and comment on the proposed guidance.

Response

Question 2

Issue 2 – Resources

We are in favour of the preferred option to combine a policy based approach with clear spatial guidance identifying sensitivities and opportunities, provided that policies allow for flexibility in development within the Park as the current approach allows, whilst also providing clarity on the opportunities and sensitivities to development.

However, we believe that the Main Issues Report does not go far enough to encourage renewable energy development within the Park. Capacity studies should be carried out to ascertain the suitability of potential renewable energy development within the Park. We particularly encourage a policy promoting development of small-scale renewables development within the Park, in line with the Park's proposals to increase sustainability and reduce resource consumption.

It is difficult to comment in detail on the proposed policy direction for resources and reducing consumption as the MIR is very broad and does not contain any details of key policies. As such, we would request that an interim consultation is carried out by CNPA prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan to allow interested parties to comment on more detailed proposals for rural areas before they are set out in the Proposed Plan. This is an approach that Dumfries & Galloway Council and Stirling Council are both approaching in the coming months, and we consider that this would be the most appropriate course of action for CNPA also. We do not wish to be in the position of objecting to large sections of the Proposed Plan on behalf of Dunachton Estate, and therefore consider that further consultation prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan would benefit both our client and CNPA, by allowing us to comment on details of key policies.

Question 3

Issue 3 – Supporting our Communities

We will support policies within the Local Development Plan which encourage opportunities for economic development and therefore agree with the preferred approach within Issue 3 of the MIR. Given the significant economic challenges of communities in these remote rural areas within the Park, policies must be developed which are open and flexible to all opportunities for economic development and tourism coming forward within the Park.

It is difficult to comment in detail on the proposed policy direction for economic development and reducing consumption as the MIR is very broad and does not contain any details of key policies. As such, we would request that an interim consultation is carried out by CNPA prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan to allow interested parties to comment on more detailed proposals for rural areas before they are set out in the Proposed Plan. This is an approach that Dumfries & Galloway Council and Stirling Council are both approaching in the coming months, and we consider that this would be the most appropriate course of action for CNPA also. We do not wish to be in the position of objecting to large sections of the Proposed Plan on behalf of Dunachton Estate, and therefore consider that further consultation prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan would benefit both our client and CNPA, by allowing us to comment on details of key policies.

Question 4

Issue 4 – Affordable Housing

The title of this Issue as "Affordable Housing" is partly ambiguous and misleading. The Issue seems to relate to the housing spatial strategy for the Park, not just affordable housing. As such, some of the text within the Options is unclear and ambiguous as to whether it relates to open

market housing or affordable housing.

We agree with the statement in Paragraph 8.2 recognising housing as a remaining important issue across the Park. With regard to the policy approach for affordable housing within the Park, we support the recognition that affordable housing policy should be amended in line with the national benchmark instead of sitting above this level.

We would encourage a flexible affordable housing policy which accounts for the varying situation with housing development across the Park. In addition, we would seek to include a flexibility of approach to the delivery of different tenures of affordable housing, recognising that the traditional social landlord provision may not be viable in all circumstances. Policy should positively encourage housing development in all rural areas, in line with Scottish Planning Policy, and be flexible enough that the affordable element of a housing scheme does not render the development unviable. Delivery of development, and in particular housing for residents and workers within the Park is key in this economic climate.

In terms of open market housing, it is important that policy does not restrict the deliverability of development. Focussing new housing on sites already adopted in Local Plans may restrict development which is viable in the plan period. Additionally, there has been insufficient choice of development sites for settlements in Local Plan allocations, and carrying these forward without identifying further sites for potential development may stranglehold development in settlements where there is only one proposed development site.

It is difficult to comment in detail on the proposed policy direction for affordable housing as the MIR is very broad and does not contain any details of key policies. As such, we would request that an interim consultation is carried out by CNPA prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan to allow interested parties to comment on more detailed proposals for affordable housing before they are set out in the Proposed Plan. This is an approach that Dumfries & Galloway Council and Stirling Council are both approaching in the coming months, and we consider that this would be the most appropriate course of action for CNPA also. We do not wish to be in the position of objecting to large sections of the Proposed Plan on behalf of Dunachton Estate, and therefore consider that further consultation prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan would benefit both our client and CNPA, by allowing us to comment on details of key housing policies.

Question 22 – Spatial Strategy – Kincaig

Smiths Gore made three submissions in June 2010 to the Call for Sites consultation as part of the initial consultation on the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan for the settlement of Kincaig on behalf of Dunachton Estates. The three sites identified in the submission were accompanied by an OS based plan showing the sites, and a copy of the Kincaig (West) Development Framework document.

The Main Issues Report does not acknowledge these submissions made in June 2010. We therefore maintain our position from the Call for Sites consultation stage, and continue to promote the three sites (as set out in the attached OS plan “Kincaig Proposed Development Site”) for residential development to allow for the future consolidation of the western edge of the village in the long-term. We also submit the three representations as submitted to CNPA in June 2010 in support of this MIR representation.

The Kincaig (West) Development Brief document is also submitted again to CNPA in support of this representation. The Brief sets out the proposals for how Kincaig could develop in the future and shows the proposals submitted at the Call for Sites stage in context. Both the Development Brief and the sites promoted at the Call for Sites stage are intended to be a longterm vision for the future development of Kincaig, rather than a large housing development in the short-term. We acknowledge the “Main Issues Report – Background Evidence – Site Analysis” prepared by CNPA and published as supporting information alongside the MIR. This report categorises each of the three sites as “Red”, on the grounds of landscape sensitivity. However, it is our view that

the sites proposed do not constitute a sensitive landscape. There are no nature conservation designations covering the sites, and the land is not prime agricultural land. It is currently used as rough grazing. Proposed development of the sites would take into consideration and protect the biodiversity of the site by retaining existing landscape features such as the knoll and burn, while protecting and enhancing these distinguishing features in any development. Existing tree and shrub cover will be augmented with additional native species and a strong landscape buffer, planted in native species, will separate the sites from the A9, further enhancing the biodiversity of the site. The stone dyke will be retained on site.

The Site Analysis document also categorises the three proposed sites as “Red” on the grounds of relationship to the existing settlement. However, we do not consider the relationship of the proposed sites to the existing settlement as an issue. The proposed sites lie to the west of the B9152 main road through the village of Kincaig, immediately adjacent to the settlement. The allocated development site H1 is no more accessible to the existing settlement than the three proposed sites here, and in fact the proposed sites are within closer walking distance to key facilities than site H1. Additionally, the next logical location for the expansion of the settlement of Kincaig would be to the west of the main road, to avoid ribbon and linear expansion along the B9152, and to create a more cohesive settlement.

Furthermore, the Site Analysis report acknowledges that each of the sites have low risk of flooding, and perform well or moderately well when tested against “site access”, “accessibility to local transport”, “access to services and facilities”, and “other considerations”. It is therefore considered that these three sites should be brought forward as housing allocations within the Local Development Plan.

We acknowledge that this level of development for the village of Kincaig is a long-term ambition. However at this time of continuing economic uncertainty, it is important to look at the deliverability of development within the Park in the short-term. Despite its allocation in the adopted Cairngorms Local Plan, and the preparation of the Kincaig H1 Development Brief in 2010 by CNPA as part of the preparation of several SPG Development Briefs to stimulate and encourage development on allocated housing sites across the Park, the housing site H1 has had no development proposals brought forward as yet.

It is therefore considered that a small site should be brought forward and allocated as a housing site within the Local Development Plan in addition to, or instead of, the proposed site “H1” to the north east of the village which has been carried over from the adopted Cairngorms Local Plan. Whilst site B proposed is a larger site which may be more suitable for longer-term development, we suggest that it would be appropriate to bring forward site A1 and/or A2 which are adjacent to the existing war memorial and would be deliverable in the short-term.

The Site Analysis report confirms that these sites do not have high risk of flooding, and indeed they do not show up on the SEPA flood maps. By comparison, the Kincaig H1 Development Brief confirms that allocated site H1 does have drainage and flooding issues which must be overcome by any development proposals for the site.

For the reasons of drainage, flooding and development viability of housing allocation H1, we question the effectiveness of this allocation. It is considered that plots A1 or A2 would be more likely to be brought forward for development. Site H1 has not come forward for development despite Kincaig being an area of interest to developers, and the site being allocated within the adopted Local Plan. As a result it is considered that either plot A1 or A2 could provide the housing requirement for Kincaig in the short-term, and both of these sites are deliverable in the Local Development Plan period.

Question 25

Issue 6 - Support for Rural Areas

Policy Approach

We will support policy for rural areas which positively encourages sustainable economic growth

in rural areas. Policy which allows for flexibility and which is in line with Scottish Planning Policy's desire in Para 92) to "enable development in all rural areas which supports prosperous and sustainable communities whilst protecting and enhancing environmental quality."

The preferred approach seems to suggest that CNPA will set out policies which will allow for different approaches in different communities. We support this approach and recognise that the character of rural areas differs from area to area across the Park, and a blanket approach will not be beneficial to allowing maximum flexibility and a positive approach to rural development. We also support the approach of allowing development in areas "where previously dispersed development has determined character" and we would further support policy resulting from this approach which allows appropriate development in rural areas. With regard to the approach of restricting "inappropriate development" in the open countryside, we request that further clarification is provided as to the definition of "inappropriate development" and the policy implications for this classification within the Plan.

The preferred Option suggests that growth should "match historic growth patterns". This focuses on the quantity not layout of growth. We suggest amending the wording to state "settlement" instead of "growth" to be less contradictory to the remainder of the MIR text and policy approach. It is difficult to comment in detail on the proposed policy direction for rural areas as the MIR is very broad and does not contain any details of key policies. As such, we would request that an interim consultation is carried out by CNPA prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan to allow interested parties to comment on more detailed proposals for rural areas before they are set out in the Proposed Plan. This is an approach that Dumfries & Galloway Council and Stirling Council are both approaching in the coming months, and we consider that this would be the most appropriate course of action for CNPA also. We do not wish to be in the position of objecting to large sections of the Proposed Plan on behalf of Dunachton Estate, and therefore consider that further consultation prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan would benefit both our client and CNPA, by allowing us to comment on details of key rural policies.

Small Building Groups

Policy 21 of the adopted Cairngorms Local Plan allows for development of new housing within existing rural building groups in appropriate locations. We request that a similar policy is carried over to the LDP, allowing for a robust and clear policy position on the acceptability of development within rural building groups, and general site principles for proposed developments. Scottish Planning Policy states (in Para 94) that "Development plans should support more opportunities for small scale housing development in all rural areas, including new clusters and groups, extensions to existing clusters and groups, replacement housing, plots on which to build individually designed houses, holiday homes and new build or conversion housing which is linked to rural businesses or would support the formation of new businesses by providing funding." We are therefore keen to see the LDP adopt the approach of the Scottish Government and give increased support for small scale housing development in "all" rural areas.

It is not our intention to erode the open countryside or promote unacceptable housing development within rural areas, but to promote a flexible housing policy for rural building groups which takes into consideration the pressures to provide appropriate housing for people living and working within the Park.

The current adopted Local Plan Policy 21 defines a rural building group as "three or more occupied dwellings". We consider that this policy could be less restrictive and account for instances where there may only be two occupied dwellings, but there are also several other buildings which would form part of a cohesive group, as per Perth & Kinross Council policy. An amendment to the wording of this policy would allow for further reinforcement and enhancement of dispersed small settlements and housing groups within the Park.

Enabling Development

In addition to a flexible policy on rural housing, we request that a policy is included within the LDP focussing on enabling development to fund restoration of listed properties and in some case, to support the development of rural enterprises. A number of other planning authorities in Scotland utilise an enabling development policy, which allows for the delivery of appropriate development to support the restoration and regeneration of listed buildings and other structures and to support rural development.

Within East Lothian Council's adopted Local Plan (2008), Policy DC1 Development in the Countryside and Undeveloped Coast part 1c contains wording which we would support and encourage for inclusion in the Cairngorms LDP – "Enabling development may [...] be acceptable where it will fund the restoration of a listed building or other significant feature of the built or natural environment, the retention of which is desirable." We would encourage a positive policy to allow enabling development to fund the restoration of listed buildings, and acknowledge that this development should not harm the setting of the listed building. In addition, the East Lothian Council example goes on to confirm that "where housing is acceptable on the grounds of enabling development it will not require to provide affordable housing" which we also support. For business and tourism development, an enabling policy would also be beneficial to allow maximum flexibility and encourage economic development within the Park. East Lothian Council's policy DC1 part 1c also relates to this and states "In the case of an employment, tourism or leisure use, an element of new build housing may be acceptable as enabling development where the Council is satisfied that (i) the wider public benefits of securing the primary use outweigh the normal policy presumption against new build housing in the countryside, and (ii) the enabling development is essential...".

Enabling development within the Park to support the restoration of listed buildings and to support tourism and business development could release and encourage economic activity within the park, and also support the protection of buildings with a high heritage value.

General Housing in the Countryside Policies

We support the policy approach within Scottish Planning Policy on housing in the countryside which states:

"94. The requirement for development plans to allocate a generous supply of land to meet housing requirements, including for affordable housing, applies equally to rural and urban areas. Development plans should support more opportunities for small scale housing development in all rural areas, including new clusters and groups, extensions to existing clusters and groups, replacement housing, plots on which to build individually designed houses, holiday homes and new build or conversion housing which is linked

to rural businesses or would support the formation of new businesses by providing funding.

Opportunities

to replace rundown housing and steadings, and to provide limited new housing along with converted

rehabilitated buildings, should be supported where the new development is designed to fit in the landscape setting and will result a cohesive grouping. Modernisation and steadying conversion should not

be constrained within the original footprint or height limit unless there are compelling design or conservation reasons for doing so.

95. The aim is not to see small settlements lose their identity nor to suburbanise the Scottish countryside

but to maintain and improve the viability of communities and to support rural businesses. In more accessible and densely populated rural areas most new development should be in or adjacent to

settlements. In less populated areas, small scale housing and other development which

supports diversification and other opportunities for sustainable economic growth whilst respecting and protecting the natural and cultural heritage should be supported in a range of locations. In these areas, new housing outwith existing settlements may have a part to play in economic regeneration and environmental renewal. All new development should respond to the specific local character of the location, fit in the landscape and seek to achieve high design and environmental standards, particularly in relation to energy efficiency. Planning authorities should apply proportionate standards to access roads to enable small developments to remain viable.”

We encourage the development of policies which continue to ensure that the Plan respects these key policies, particularly given the remote rural nature of the Park area.

Question 27 – Other Issues

The introductory page to the Main Issues Report (MIR) states that the MIR “sets out choices for the land allocations that could be made for development, and for policies that the CNPA and its constituent local authorities will use to make decisions on applications for planning permission”. Whilst covering the relevant main issues within the Park which must be covered by the Local Development Plan (LDP), we do not consider that the MIR goes far enough within each issue to propose any options for specific policies. The MIR is very broad and only covers the general direction that policy under each issue will cover. It gives no indication as to whether policies from the adopted Cairngorms Local Plan will be considered and brought forward to the LDP, or instances where policies may be changed considerably or dropped altogether from the LDP. From our experience of making representations to Main Issues Reports, this MIR falls short of giving assurance that issues which are of particular importance to our clients will be considered and included in the LDP.

We therefore request that an interim consultation is carried out by CNPA prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan to allow interested parties to comment on more detailed proposals before they are set out in the Proposed Plan. This is an approach that Dumfries & Galloway Council and Stirling Council are both approaching in the coming months, and we consider that this would be the most appropriate course of action for CNPA also.

We do not wish to be in the position of objecting to large sections of the Proposed Plan on behalf of Dunachton Estate, and therefore consider that further consultation prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan would benefit both our client and CNPA, by allowing us to comment on details of key policies.

Question 28 – Supplementary Guidance

Of specific relevance and importance to Dunachton Estate is the Supplementary Planning Guidance on “Housing Development in Rural Building Groups”. We agree with the proposal to use the direction given in the current supplementary guidance as a starting point to revisit the range of guidance, particularly with Housing Development in Rural Building Groups.

Scottish Planning Policy states (in para 19) that supplementary guidance should be “derived from the plan” and be “the subject of discussion and engagement”. We therefore request and expect that the range of supplementary guidance published by CNPA will reflect the policies within the Local Development Plan and allow for a period of public engagement and comment on the proposed guidance.

(Maps of Kincaig Proposed development site supplied
Development Framework for Kincaig supplied
information supplied as part of 'Call for sites' supplied)

Ref 72 Name Helen Geddes

Response

Housing Allocation: Given that special cultural and natural heritage values of the area are considered to be of National Importance there should be a much tighter restriction on making land available for housing. Only houses required to provide a bank of SOCIAL housing stock should be built. Any houses that are built should be in small scale developments , or infill clusters of 1-4 dwellings , that local tradesmen can participate in. Housing associations/ housing trusts should consider supporting these local initiatives.

The past 10 years of unhindered housing development has shown that large scale developers gobble up housing allocations, swamp communities and most importantly do not address the problems of local residents requirements for "social" ie subsidised housing. These developers do not employ local tradesman, but bring in their teams from elsewhere.

Affordable housing is not social housing & it does not address local housing need (as admitted by the CNPA at the recent Boat of Garten Community Consultation meeting). Solving the SOCIAL housing need should be the main principle addressed by teh CNPA housing & communities policies. A full range of options should be enabled including supporting community based housing trusts, residency criteria and a moratorium on anything other than SOCIAL housing development for say the next 10 years.

It should not be easier to build houses in the National Park than to breach the greenbelt around Inverness! At present it is and that is a key driver for developers moving here!! The CNPA should be looking after our land and our natural heritage not allowing it to be despoiled, once land is built on it is very difficult for it to go back to natural habitat.

Safeguarding Natural Heritage: We are very fortunate to live in such a special area(in terms of habitats and rare and endangered species). This specialness supports both our quality of life and underpins the income earned from providing services for visitors. I would like to see the CNPA promoting best practice and understanding of this, after all no-one would not support a hotel complex to be built across the migration route of Wildebeest in the Serengetti, so we must vigorously defend our equivalent special resources - such as otter, pearl mussel, capercaillie, frog orchid habitat etc It is time the CNPA provided clear and unequivocal guidance to protect the first aim of the CNP. It is why the Park was founded. Where is the added value of having a National Park? Without clear and overriding support for the first aim there is little difference between developments that take place within the CNP and outwith it. This Park Plan should support that difference and result in a clear boundary between activity within and outside of the Park

Ref 73 Name Lorna O`Connell

Response

I live at West Station House, Woodlands Terrace, Grantown on Spey.

I would like you to clarify if my field which is adjacent to the house and has always been attached to the house is going to be zoned for economic development?

I would like to object if this is the case. As far as I am aware there is no shortage of industrial units in this area therefore no need to zone this field as becoming part of the 'industrial estate'. I would have thought that it could possibly be a more 'grey' area..... There are several possibilities for it in the long term especially if the steam railway comes through to here then adding more industrial units would not really be very attractive. Also a major point as far as I'm concerned is that my house should not be completely surrounded by industrial units..... I'm pretty sure they

arrived after the house!!!

You'll have to excuse me for writing a very hurried email to you about this but I am not a company, I not have legal teams etc... I am just a homeowner with field in the middle of an industrial estate!

I do not see any benefit to the industrial estate (or anyone else) zoning this for economic development only.....as per a previous email from you to me....
(previous email correspondence supplied)

Ref 74 Name Tactran

Response

Tactran supports the preferred options.

Ref 75 Name MacDonald Aviemore Highland Resort Ltd

Response

We have been instructed by our clients, Macdonald Aviemore Highland Resort Ltd, to submit representations to the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) Main Issues Report (MIR) on the emerging Local Development Plan (LDP).

General

Our clients welcome the recognition given in the introduction of the MIR that while there are four aims for Scottish National Parks, pursuant to the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000, with the first aim conserving and enhancing the natural and cultural heritage, the objective is to deliver all four aims together. Of equal importance are the other three aims, including the promotion of sustainable, economic and social development of the area's communities. The terms of paragraph 1.8 are important in that it makes it clear that the aim of conserving and enhancing the natural and cultural heritage qualities should neither be seen as the starting point nor as the default position where there is conflict between the four aims. Our clients welcome the integrated approach which is advocated through the appropriate management of competing interests. At 4528 square kilometres, the Cairngorms National Park covers a wide range of different land uses and character and so different considerations will apply in different areas or communities.

Issue 1: Special Qualities of the Park

Our clients support the proposed move away from dealing with the entire Park area as a whole. As stated above, the sheer scale of the Park and the different characters and settlements within the Park mean that a "one size fits all" approach is not appropriate. The MIR rightly recognises that this approach does not provide developers or communities with any confidence. Adopting a more focussed approach which identifies areas which have special qualities and then protecting them through the spatial strategy will provide certainty for developers and landowners and will allow the CNPA to direct development to the most appropriate areas. It should mean that outwith the sensitive sites, the development industry can invest in sustainable economic development which will benefit the overall Park.

Issue 3: Support for Communities

Our clients support the more focussed approach of identifying different communities and supporting economic opportunities within those communities, but this must sit below a wider Park strategy on economic growth. Reference is made below to the need for an overarching policy on tourism. It is submitted that a high level approach needs to be identified before

consideration is given to proposals at settlement level.

Issue 5: Spatial Strategy - general

It is noted that the general development policy is "to retain the focus of development on key settlements" which are best able to absorb the bulk of future development (paragraph 6.11). Against this background, our clients believe that the Spatial Strategy as set out under Issue 5 of the MIR is the most sensible way forward. It is noted that consideration has been given to the housing requirement for the next 20 years, but a similar calculation is not evident for economic development. Paragraph 9.7 suggests that this information is not available. Some additional land is identified for new economic development, but our clients would wish to see more emphasis being placed on supporting existing businesses and providing support and encouragement for ongoing investment in these businesses. Flexibility should be allowed for existing sites/developments to expand/intensify.

We note that the MIR maps for the identified settlements do not show settlement boundaries. This is an important omission as settlement boundaries will determine what policy zonings apply to certain sites. It is presumed that other than new allocations, land within the settlement boundary will be shown as "white land" with no specific annotations to allow the flexibility of development within the settlement in the future. This would assist in meeting the four aims of the Scottish National Parks (as set out in paragraph 1.4 from the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 ("the Act")), the last of which is the promotion of sustainable, economic and social development.

Issue 5 Spatial Strategy: Aviemore

Our clients support the recognition in section 10 of the MIR that Aviemore is one of the main strategic settlements in the settlement hierarchy (page 49/50/51 of Issue 5). Our clients agree with the preferred option as set out on page 51 that land uses with existing permissions provide the opportunities for housing and economic growth within the Aviemore settlement.

Our clients are committed to enhancing the "key role" that Aviemore plays in the wider region by enhancing the existing provision of leisure and retail facilities in Aviemore. Our clients operate a large tourist and leisure facility known as the Macdonald Aviemore Resort Grampian Road, Aviemore and seek to create a balanced community through the implementation of the planning consent obtained in April 2011 for the construction of a mixed use development comprising residential, retail, office, community, leisure, environmental improvements, roads, additional lodges and hotel extension at The Aviemore Centre under reference 08/041/CP (Highland Council reference 08///170/FULBS).

Whilst the MIR stresses the need to protect options for inward investment and growth and expansion of existing businesses, it is not clear how this is to be done in the LDP. We have referred elsewhere to the need for a stronger Park wide tourism policy and it is submitted that our clients' development should be identified as a key part of an overall tourism policy.

Through such an approach, our clients would feel more confident in its ongoing investment in the area. Also as noted elsewhere, it will be important for the site to be afforded sufficient flexibility for development in the settlement statement for Aviemore.

Issue 7: Connectivity and Communications

Under this issue CNP A seeks to identify a preferred approach to helping people move round the Park. Our clients agree that connectivity is "vital to the way the Park functions as a tourism destination" and that it is "fundamental to economic activity and impacts on how our communities work and play". As set out above, our clients welcome the ongoing importance being afforded to Aviemore as a key settlement within the Park and wish to see greater support for their existing resort in Aviemore as a key tourist destination. Since the LDP looks ahead for the next 20 years, it is submitted that consideration should be given to providing a new access off the A9 into our clients' resort. Such an access would increase the

profile of the resort and thus encourage further visitors to the benefit of the other businesses in Aviemore. With the announcement of the dualling of the A9, it is a suitable time to be looking at the opportunities for new junctions.

Comment on Other Important Policy Issues

The MIR deals with seven broad planning issues which the LDP is to address. Chapter 14 of the MIR identifies general topics to be carried forward from the current adopted Plan into the LDP or Supplementary Guidance. Our clients are disappointed to note that tourism is not considered as a key issue to be addressed in the LDP. It is submitted that tourism should be considered as a Park-wide matter and not just at settlement level which appears to be the suggestion under Issue 3: Support for Communities. It is submitted that the Plan requires to adopt a positive stance to encourage investment in tourism within the Park. It should not simply be considered as "economic development". It is particularly disappointing that the references to tourism in Issue 3 are framed negatively with phrases such as "areas which experience the greatest visitor pressure". The Park economy depends heavily on tourism and the areas which are most popular should be regarded as opportunities to encourage further investment. A suitable tourism strategy, linked to the revised spatial strategy, should ensure not only the protection of the Park's most sensitive areas, but also provide opportunities for growth in key settlements.

Our clients welcome the opportunity of being able to participate in this MIR stage and look forward to being able to provide further information and comment as necessary through the next stages of the Cairngorms National Local Development Plan.

Ref 76 Name Jane Smith

Response

Would you please note that my support is for option 2 ie for all future housing in the CNP to be affordable. I do not support the preferred option 3.

Ref 77 Name Invercauld Estate

Response

Monaltrie Park Northeast - Ballater

We write on behalf of Invercauld Estates in relation to land at Monaltrie Park Northeast, Ballater. Invercauld Estate fully supports the retention of the site in the Local Development Plan (LDP). The land to the Northeast of Monaltrie Park was allocated for residential development in the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan. The site is identified for 250 units. Invercauld Estate requests that the National Park Authority continues to support the development of this site and requests that the site is included in the LDP.

The continued identification of this site in the LDP will enable the masterplanning undertaken as part of the Enquiry by Design process to be utilised.

Issue 4- Housing/Affordable Housing

The preferred option states that sites in the adopted local plan should be required to provide a benchmark figure of 25% affordable housing. We consider that the affordable housing policy in the Proposed Plan should provide flexibility in relation to affordable housing provision. We would suggest that the policy of applying a 25% benchmark should be flexible to take into consideration local circumstances and site specific issues.

The benchmark 25% affordable housing provision does not take into consideration specific settlement requirements. Paragraph 8.15 of the Main Issues Report does recognise that the application of a 25% benchmark will provide more affordable units that required. A flexible approach to affordable housing policy will allow the needs to the local community to be achieved and housing sites to deliver the specific requirements on an individual settlement basis.

Issue 5 - Spatial Strategy Ballater

Invercauld Estate fully supports the National Park Authority's commitment within the Main Issues Report to identify land for growth and investment in Ballater. Our client is supportive of continued allocation of the site in the Proposed Plan.

The background papers that accompany the Main Issues Report (Site Analysis) states that the site is a preferred option and we support the inclusion of this site as a preferred housing site.

Effectiveness of the Site

Invercauld Estate wish to emphasise the effectiveness of this site in planning terms.

Planning Advice Note (PAN) 2/2010: Affordable Housing and Housing Land Audits establishes a criteria for

assessing the effectiveness of a housing site. Paragraph 55 for the PAN states that the assess if a site is

effective, it must be demonstrated that within the five-year period beyond the date of the audit the site can be developed for housing and will be free of constraints on the following basis:

- Ownership
- Physical
- Contamination
- Deficit Funding
- Marketability
- Infrastructure
- Land Use

There are no ownership constraints to this site.

As demonstrated by the masterplanning and Enquiry By Design process that has been undertaken, the site is free from physical constraints. The site is also free from contamination. Through participation in the LDP process Scotia Homes Ltd has shown commitment to achieving a successful development at the site.

We consider that the site to the northeast of Monaltrie Park provides the most effective housing site to deliver the future growth requirements of Ballater.

The continued allocation of the site for residential development and mixed use development will provide

certainty over the deliverability of the site and allow the masterplanning and consultation process to progress.

We trust that the above comments will be taken into consideration in the preparation of the Proposed Plan and that the site will continue to be allocated in the emerging Local Development Plan.

Issue 5 - Spatial Strategy Braemar

We write on behalf of Invercauld Estate in relation to the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Main Issues Report (MIR). Invercauld Estate is fully committed to participating in the preparation of the Local Development Plan (LDP) and welcomes the opportunity to comment on the MIR.

In particular we refer to the section of the MIR that is specific to Braemar (Section 11.6). The context section states that 'Braemar is a tight knit community and the village serves many small outlying settlements. This community is keen to maintain itself as vibrant and viable into the future. To do this there is a need for housing for local people, support for local businesses, improved communications, and maintenance of local services.' The Invercauld Estate is a key part of this community and is committed to contributing to maintaining Braemar as a vibrant and viable community into the future.

In the context to this settlement section we welcome the comment in paragraph 11.2 of the MIR that the LDP '... Must ensure that there are opportunities for all communities across the Park, not just in the main settlements.'

The MIR makes reference to the review of the options for development that has commenced (the Braemar masterplan exercise) and that should further options come from consultation with the community, via this masterplan exercise, then these may be considered in the future.

The requirement for a masterplan emerged from the existing local plan. The aim of the masterplan process was to help inform the review of the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan and the

future development of Braemar as a sustainable community in its own right. The masterplan considers the context of Braemar and the key physical constraints and opportunities. Considering the key themes from the Community Visioning exercise, the masterplan suggests potential actions and specific projects that could assist in delivering these themes.

In response to the MIR Issue 5 Spatial Strategy- Braemar we consider that the masterplan should inform the LDP that is currently being prepared. It is considered that this approach will contribute to issues that have been identified such the need for affordable housing, support for local businesses and services and stimulation of environmental improvements in Braemar.

We consider that, subject to further community consultation, there are a number of potential initiatives, proposals and development sites that have emerged from the initial masterplan process and that should be included in the LDP in the short to medium term rather than as potential long term options. Invercauld Estate welcomes the consultation process that has taken place on the masterplan to date and is fully committed to being involved in the process of taking this forward. We would welcome further discussion with the CNPA on this representation and the preparation of the LDP Proposed Plan.

Ref 78 Name Scotia Homes Ltd

Response

Monaltrie Park Northeast. Ballater

INTRODUCTION

1.1 This submission has been prepared by Emac Planning LLP on behalf of Scotia Homes Ltd in relation to land northeast of Monaltrie Park, Ballater. The site, which is within the control of Scotia Homes Ltd, is identified on Plan 1 below.

(Plan 1: Site Boundary supplied)

1.2 Scotia Homes Ltd welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan (LDP) Main Issues Report (MIR) and consider that the site, as identified on Map 8: Ballater of the MIA is included in the LDP for an integrated mixed use development, comprising residential, business, recreation and community uses.

1.3 This statement supplements the attached comments form from the NPA's on-line portal at <http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/resource/docs/publications/02112011/CNPA.Paper.1742.Main%20Issues%20Report%20-%20CONSULTATION%20COMMENTS%20FORM.pdf>

RECENT PLANNING BACKGROUND

2.1 The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan. Adopted 2010 has designated the site (Ref: BL/H1) for housing and mixed use. The Local Plan identifies the site has the capacity to deliver around 250 units, with 90 dwellings envisaged for construction during the life of the Plan, leaving capacity for 160 for the longer term. Paragraph 2.7 of the Local Plan identifies that the duration of the plan is " ... for up to five years from adoption, .. " and " ... identifies strategic sites and land for some development to provide certainty about the use of land in the medium to longer term beyond the next five years."

2.2 Plan 2 identifies the site boundary in relation to the Local Plan MIR designation and illustrates that the subject site is contiguous with the current Local Plan designation.
(Plan 2: Site Boundary and Local Plan MIR Proposals Map supplied)

GENERAL JUSTIFICATION FOR RETENTION OF THE SITE IN THE PROPOSED LDP

3.1 In addition to the following detailed comments on the MIR [Section 4.0), it is considered that, on the basis of the above planning status and for the following reasons the site should be re-confirmed for future mixed use development in the Proposed LDP:

- o The continued identification of the site in this LDP is required to fulfil the level of housing already committed to through an existing statutory development plan.

- o The site is capable of delivering effective housing and other required new development including community, business and recreational uses.

- o The continued identification of this site in the Proposed LDP will enable existing valuable work initiated by the Enquiry by Design process on masterplanning and community engagement to continue; thereby facilitating a masterplanned approach to the future of the site through community engagement. As advocated by national policy within Designing Streets and Designing Places.

- o This site had already been afforded statutory status for development as recently as 2010, within the adopted Local Plan. There has been no change in circumstances over the last year to justify removal of its designation.

- o The site has statutory status for development for 90 houses in the first 5 years of the Plan, that is 2010-2015, and longer term status for 160 houses beyond this period. Having regard to 825 of the Act,

the current Local Plan would support, in principle, the development of this site in the event of a planning application being submitted.

- o Whilst the market is currently operating at a slower rate than previously due to funding restrictions to both the building industry and through the provision of mortgage finance, this site still remains effective and Scotia Homes Ltd still intends to implement the development of the site, albeit that the phasing may be slower than anticipated in the Local Plan,

3.2 Scotia Homes Ltd submitted a development bid to the CNPA on the LDP in June 2010.

These are attached in support of the site specific and planning reasons for identifying this site for mixed use development.

DETAILED SUBMISSIONS ON THE MIR

Issue 1 - Special Qualities of the Park

4.1 Question 1: Do you agree with the preferred option? Yes

Issue 2- Resources/Reducing our Consumption

4.2 Question 2: Do you agree with the preferred option? Yes, however it is considered that incorporation of such guidance within the SOG, should be subject to further public consultation prior to the publication of the Proposed LDP.

4.3 It is relevant that Scotia Homes Ltd have already made comments on the initial consultation of the SPG stating that the principle of developing SPG on this issue is supported, however, concern was expressed that within the current financial climate the SPG is not sufficiently flexible and it is considered that the CNPA should adjust some of the requirements, in order to ensure that overall costs do not impede delivering projects. In seeking to achieve sustainable design objectives developments also need to have regard to delivering other developer requirements currently required by Policies contained in the Local Plan.

4.4 Whilst the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 may introduce requirements on Authorities to address this issue, SPP is clear that the role of Development Plans is to guide development to promote a "pattern"

of development which is sustainable and to require the siting, design and layout of all new development to limit likely greenhouse gas emissions, particularly by limiting resource and energy requirements [Paragraph 42).

4.5 The suggested 'clear spatial guidance' is therefore supported as it would comply with SPP's intention that the LDP should promote a sustainable "pattern" of development. Within this context, the intention of the CNPA indicated in paragraph 6.11 of the MIA is supported, which states that "We propose to retain the key focus of development on key settlements."

Issue 3 - Support for our Communities

4.6 Question 3: Do you agree with the preferred option? Yes, Scotia Homes Ltd welcomes the preferred approach to supporting communities and appropriate opportunities for economic development, services and facilities within them.

4.7 Land at Monaltrie Park Northeast has already been designated for mixed use in the adopted Local Plan and Scotia Homes is working towards achieving development which secures housing, economic growth, as identified in Issue 8 of this MIA, together with other community uses.

4.8 It is considered that this can best be achieved, at Monaltrie Park Northeast, through the proposed new Policy and through the masterplanning process, including future further community engagement, to support the creation of a sustainable mixed use community, in accordance with SPP objectives.

4.9 In order to meet with community objectives and aspirations, Scotia Homes Ltd will continue to work with the CNPA, the community and other interested parties on the future Masterplan for the site. In addition to supporting the work already carried out through the Enquiry by Design [EbD), Scotia Homes also recognises the importance of the views of the community who have identified a number of key community priorities for Ballater. Scotia Homes has demonstrated its willingness to work with local people to obtain a solution that is satisfactory for all stakeholders.

Issue 4 - Affordable Housing

4.10 Question 4: Do you agree with the preferred option? Yes, but subject to the following modification. Scotia Homes Ltd support this approach, but consider that the Policy in the

Proposed LDP, provides for further flexibility and the last sentence is replaced with wording similar to "A benchmark of 25% affordable housing will be sought as a target on sites, subject to a settlement based justification for such provision. The CNPA will work in partnership with the private sector to secure affordable housing, where this is viable, and will consider innovative and new models for its delivery. The provision of level entry housing or first time buyers housing as part of a mixed use sustainable development will be supported."

4.11 In support of the above suggested change, the following comments are made:

- o Paragraph 8.5 of the MIA acknowledges that the need for affordable housing " ... will be met from existing consents" over the next 20 years. However, the CNPA is still seeking to request a further 25%

affordable housing contribution on new sites, which is not appear to be justified on a settlement basis in the background paper "Evidence 1: Housing and Population". As a result the approach would appear

to be contrary to National Advice contained in PAN 2/ 2010 which is clear that the application of this percentage should be clearly justified, stating in paragraph 14:

"SPP states that authorities may seek a percentage affordable housing contribution from developers of new housing developments where this is justified by the HNDA and included in the LHS and development plan. The benchmark figure is that each site should contribute 25% of the total number of housing units as affordable housing. If a different percentage is required locally, justified by the HNDA and identified in the LHS and development plan, then the 25% benchmark does not apply."

- o The CNPA already recognise the above conflict in paragraph 8.15 of the MIA which states that " ... When looked at in a purely mathematical way, this will provide more affordable units than we are shown to need."

- o Scotia Homes Ltd are sympathetic to the comments made in paragraph 8.6 of the MIA, which identify that the provision from existing consents is not necessarily linked to the community at most need for affordable housing. Including housing for young people.

- o Mindful of, Scottish Government advice and this local issue Scotia Homes Ltd consider that a modification to the proposed policy as suggested above would allow the flexibility necessary to work with

the CNPA on delivery with the aim of achieving local community aspirations, pending a more detailed settlement; specific justification for the benchmark figure currently proposed by the CNPA (see also comments below).

- o Partnership in delivery is further supported by the Delivering Housing for Local Needs, 2010 report by Andrew McCafferty Associates and paragraph 7.3 of the Evidence Paper 1, which states that • ... An

enabling approach where the public sector and private developers can work in a positive way seems the most likely way to deliver the housing required to meet the local demands rather than taking a

more drastic approach through the application of restrictive planning mechanisms."

4.12 Scotia Homes Ltd has already provided comments of concern, in May 2010, on the proposed Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing and it is suggested that this is reviewed as part of the LDP process. In particular, in the absence of any detailed justification for further affordable housing at a benchmark of 25%, as referred to above, it is considered that the opportunity is taken, as part of a review of the SPG and the Proposed LDP Policy, that further research is undertaken to justify this target on a settlement basis. This is considered to be particularly important in the absence of such information in the Background Paper: Evidence 1 - Housing and Population.

Issue 5: Spatial Strategy - How and where should development happen in the National Park
4.13 Question 5 - Do you agree with the preferred option? Yes, for the reasons given, that is, this will enable development to be directed to areas most suitable to accommodate it, whilst ensuring a sustainable approach to the development of housing and economic development. In particular the Proposed LDP should retain a commitment to either sites which have planning permission already, or "maintains the status quo" and include sites already included in the adopted Local Plan, which is accordance with the requirements of S25 of the Act are acceptable in principle for development until such time as the Local Plan is superseded.

Issue 5 Spatial Strategy - Ballater: What are the options for growth in Ballater?

4.14 Question 8: Do you agree with the preferred option? Yes. Scotia Homes Ltd has previously identified detailed planning and site specific reasons why this site justifies identification for mixed use development in the Proposed LDP. This information is contained in their site bid submission on the LDP in June 2010 and relevant supporting extracts are contained in Appendix 1.

4.15 In addition to the above, the CNPA's background paper to the MIR (Evidence 5: Site Analysis Part 1) justifies the sites inclusion as a preferred option. The 'traffic light' analysis indicates 'green' for most criteria utilised, with 'amber' for the area of potential flooding to the east. This area, which was formerly identified for development in the adopted Local Plan has been removed from Map 8 and Scotia Homes supports this amendment.

4.16 In terms of future phasing of the development of the site, Scotia Homes Ltd notes the programming identified in the relevant Housing Land Audit.

Appendix 2 of of Evidence Paper 1 on the established, constrained and effective land supply. 2010 for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire identifies initiation of the sites development in 2013. Scotia Homes Ltd are supportive of the programming anticipating delivery of approximately 20 units per year.

Issue 7 Connectivity and Communications How can we help people move around the Park - local access, tourists, people travelling through the Park?

4.17 The preferred approach is supported including the requirement for developments to make a contribution towards existing and new routes, where this complies with Circular 1/2010 on Planning Agreements.

4.18 Question 26: Do you agree with the preferred option? Yes, in that it should enable development to provide for enhancements to connectivity as par of integrated development proposal, with developments on the edge of settlements being well located to enhance networks from the settlement to adjoining countryside.

Issue 14 Other Issues

4.19 Question 27 Other Issues: It is considered that a policy should be included in the Proposed LDP on the housing land requirement and supply, in order that this can be consulted upon as part of the statutory development plan.

At this stage the relevant information is contained in the supporting evidence only.

Issue 15 Supplementary Guidance

4.20 Paragraph 15.2 of the MIR refers to SG being provided on 'Housing' and it is requested that this is extended to cover 'Affordable Housing' as per previous SG commented on in 2010 and as also referred to above. The provision of updated guidance on Sustainable Design and CarbonEmissions is welcomed for the reasons stated above, together with updated SPG on Developer Requirements. Scotia Homes Ltd would be happy to comment further on the draft SPG, prior to the publication of the Proposed LDP, if at all possible.

CONCLUSION

5.1 Scotia Homes Ltd considers that development to the northeast of Monaltrie Park provides for the best geographic location to provide for the future growth requirements of Ballater. A commitment to the site in the LDP will allow certainty on the future growth of Ballater and allow the masterplanning process to take on a broader vision encapsulating both the land use and environmental requirements of the community.

5.2 The allocation of housing and mixed-use development allows the opportunity to develop a new integrated mixed use community and Scotia Homes Ltd will work with the Council, the community and other parties to achieve these objectives.

5.3 It is respectfully requested that land to the northeast of Monaltrie Park, as identified in the MIR, is allocated for residential and mixed-use development in the Proposed Local Development Plan.

APPENDIX 1: EXTRACT FROM SCOTIA HOMES LTD STATEMENT ON THE CNPA LDP: DEVELOPMENT BID SUBMISSION

3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

3.1 The site as endorsed by the CNPA in the Local Plan Post Inquiry Modifications extends to an area of 16.12 hectares and is located to the northeast of Monaltrie Park. The topography of the site is relatively flat and lies within the river valley, forming a green wedge protruding into the built settlement of Ballater.

3.2 The fields are contained to the northwest and southeast by relatively recent residential development, with Monaltrie Park immediately adjoining the site to the west. Further agricultural land extends to the northeast. Monaltrie House, a Category 8 Listed Building, lies immediately to the north of the site, with a small pocket of residential development further to the northeast off Movern Way. There are existing footpaths/cycle paths along the northwest and southeast of the site linking into the existing built up area of Ballater.

3.3 Craighendarroch Hill frames Ballater to the northwest and the River Dee encloses the town to the east.

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

4.1 The proposal relates to the continued identification of this site for a sustainable mixed use development in the LDP. The identification of the site will provide a commitment to the future phases of housing development as identified in the Cairngorm National Park Local Plan Post Inquiry Modifications, 2010, for the period post 2011. The Local Plan commits to a further 160 houses in the period post 2011, in addition to the 90 houses envisaged for construction in the period of the Local Plan itself.

4.2 Given that the LDP will shortly replace the Local Plan it is considered that the entire allocation at site BL/H1 is re-identified in the LDP, with the same requirements relating to masterplanning and achieving a high quality sustainable mixed use community.

4.3 Scotia Homes Ltd agree with the Reporter's conclusions following the Local Plan Inquiry that this site provides the only realistic opportunity for the future growth of Ballater. The Report states that:

"There are very clear physical restrictions to the future expansion of Ballater. The steep slopes of Craighendarroch Hill to the north west, and the golf course/ flood plain to the south clearly limit development. In addition, the River {Dee} creates a very clear boundary to the town to the east... In the light of these physical obstacles, and bearing in mind the characteristics of the site, we find that the only realistic direction for an extension to the built up area of Ballater is to the north."

5.0 PLANNING HISTORY

5.1 The adopted Aberdeenshire Local Plan 2006 identified a site fh 1 to the northeast of Monaltrie Park, however, the Plan did not specify capacity or phasing. The deposit version of the Cairngorms National Park (CNP) Local Plan subsequently identified a site of 1 0.99 hectares to the northeast for housing

land. The finalised version of the CNP Local Plan and the subsequent Post Inquiry Modifications extend the site further to the northeast to allow for longer term housing and mixed use development. The current proposal in the Local Plan Post Inquiry Modifications reflects the site boundary, subject to this submission.

5.2 The Local Plan considers that the site has a capacity for around 250 units with 90 dwellings envisaged for construction during the life of the Local Plan. The plan expects a further 1 00 houses will be built in the period to 2016 with the remaining capacity available to meet medium to long term need.

6.0 PLANNING POLICY JUSTIFICATION

6.1 Whilst it is not necessary to detail the full planning and development context relating to the site, Scotia Homes considers that the following summary is relevant to their representations.

6.2 The Development Plan context for Ballater is provided by the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Structure Plan 2001: North East Scotland Together [NEST) and The Aberdeenshire Local Plan 2006.

6.3 The Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Structure Plan 2001: North East Scotland Together [NEST) provides for the strategic planning framework for the area up to the period 2016. Policy 1 0 identifies the Indicative Housing Distribution 2011 - 2015 requiring 2,200 houses in the Aberdeenshire Rural Housing Market Area.

6.4 Policy Hou/2 of the Aberdeenshire Local Plan 2006 identifies the housing land requirement for the area up to 2015 in line with the Structure Plan. The settlement plan for Ballater indicates the subject site for future development, but does not specify phasing or numbers.

6.5 These two Plans currently provide for the Development Plan context for the site and would support the site's identification for mixed use and residential development in the forthcoming LDP. Further support for the site's identification in the LDP is provided for in the GNP Local Plan which is progressing towards adoption in 2010/2011 and has a duration of 5 years from adoption. The Plan also identifies strategic sites for the period beyond to provide certainty and includes the subject land development in the Local Plan period and beyond.

6.6 The CNPA prepared the Local Plan within the context of the Cairngorms National Park Plan (approved 2007) and will also be preparing the LDP within the same strategic context and taking into account its objectives. It is considered therefore that the allocation of this site in the LDP would provide consistency in decision making and certainty in delivery. The strategic context for reaching the previous conclusions on the merits of this site on the Local Plan remains the same for the LDP.

6.7 This is a site which has already been the subject to assessment on its appropriateness for future development and it is not considered that there has been a change in circumstances since the site has been identified for future development. 'The Cairngorms Landscape Capacity for Housing Study' undertaken during the preparation of the consultative draft Local Plan characterised settlements around the Cairngorms National Park and identified areas that had capacity to absorb new housing without significant changes in landscape and settlement character, as well as areas where housing would be likely to lead to significant changes. The CNPA also conducted walkover surveys of the Local Plan proposals sites in order to verify the ground conditions and species/habitats present and surrounding the sites.

6.8 The Strategic Environmental Assessment of Local Plan Post Modifications Inquiry, May 2010 identifies, in relation to Ballater East that "The development of the proposal site could lead to negative effects on the landscape and settlement character of Ballater. However a detailed masterplan and design brief for the site will be prepared to ensure development is of the highest quality and minimises negative effects."

6.9 In addition, the CNPA conclude in Paper 2 14/05/ 1 0: Analysis of Reporters Recommendations and Post Inquiry Modifications of the Local Plan, 2010 that Ballater is the only strategic settlement in the east of the Park, and the Reporters agree that housing

development on the allocated site, in the main, promotes the strategic objectives of the National Park Plan. They find no site specific factors which rule out the site for consideration as a housing allocation, and conclude that the site can be considered as being effective in the life of the plan."

6.10 Clearly the site has been subject to extensive analysis and consultation during the preparation of The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan and this Plan now identifies the site for housing and mixed use development. It is considered that both the existing and emerging Development Plan context support the future growth of Ballater on this site and this supports the continued inclusion of the site in the forthcoming LDP.

6.11 It is further considered that the development of this site, through the masterplanning process and with community engagement can achieve Scottish Government policy objectives as set out in SPP, 2010 that the planning system should enable the development of well designed, energy efficient, good quality

housing in sustainable locations and allocate a generous supply of land to meet identified housing requirements across all tenures and also to support the creation of sustainable mixed communities.

7.0 COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Scotia Homes Ltd will seek to work with the CNPA, the community and other interested parties on the future Masterplan for the site. They agree with the intention of the Local Plan that the Masterplan should be used as a tool to create a mixed use development of high quality design, which respects the historic

environment and creates a sustainable form of development.

7.2 Scotia Homes Ltd supports the work already carried out by The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment through the Enquiry by Design (EbD) carried out in 2006 and the further Design Workshop held in 2009. Scotia Homes also recognises the importance of the views of the community and those expressed by Ballater One Voice Our Future (BOVOF) who have identified a number of key community priorities for Ballater.

8.0 SITE SPECIFIC JUSTIFICATIONS/ SERVICES & SITE EFFECTIVENESS

8.1 The Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report carried out for the Cairngorms National Park LP Post Inquiry Modifications (Consultation May 2010) concluded that the site had the ability to deliver effective new housing and mixed use development, and concluded the following:

8.2

o More information on the actual flood risks linked to the proposal site is needed to predict whether the site is likely to have significant effects on the function of the flood plain.

o The development of the proposal site is considered unlikely to affect the integrity of the river Dee SAC. The waste waters from the site would be treated at the Ballater waste water treatment works north east of the site.

o The waste water treatment works do not have capacity to absorb such a development at present and no growth in capacity is planned for the period 2007-2010. However, the inclusion of the proposal site in the Local Plan will trigger review of the planned capacity by Scottish Water.

o Consent for any phase of development would only be permitted when the sewage works could treat waste waters to a standard that would have no significant adverse effects on the River Dee SAC.

o Detailed proposals would be expected to incorporate measures to avoid impacts on the river Dee SAC from construction and operation.

o The fresh water supply for Ballater is abstracted from the river Gairn which is a tributary of the river Dee SAC. Although Scottish Water consider it likely that the source could provide capacity for future development, there is uncertainty about the cumulative effects of water abstraction on the river Dee SAC.

o An appropriate assessment has also been completed of the implications of the Local Plan's proposals for the River Dee SAC. This has shown that since all development must comply with

Policy 1 Natura 2000 Sites, which protects Natura sites in accordance with the Conservation [Natural Heritage &c) Regulations 1994 as emended the impacts are not considered to be significant.

The SEA concluded that a detailed masterplan and design brief for the site will be prepared to ensure development is of the highest quality and minimises negative effects. In effect the CPNA considers that the site is capable of overcoming infrastructure constraints which will be addressed through the masterplan. Scotia Homes Ltd is happy to work with the Council, the community and other stakeholders on these matters to secure a sustainable mixed use development of high quality design to the northeast of Monaltrie Park.

Ref 79 Name Mar Estate

Response

1.0 General/Introduction

This report represents the view of the Mar Estate on the Cairngorms National Park Main Issues Report. It has been prepared on their behalf by Halliday Fraser Munro and concentrates on key issues for discussion. The consultation document sets out a number of specific questions. These have been numbered in this response in exactly the same manner as the Draft Park Plan consultation documents:

The MIR has 5 background evidence papers on Housing and Population (1), The Economy (2), Monitoring (3), Other Information (4) and Site Analysis (5). We will refer to these where appropriate.

2.0 Issues

2.1 Issue 1-Special Qualities of the Park (p.17)

The MIR asks "How can we protect the special qualities of the Park and provide clarity on where development should and should not go?". The CNPA preferred approach is through a policy-based approach with additional map-based spatial guidance on designated conservation sites, habitat connectivity, wildness and landscape character.

RESPONSE

In general a combination of policy and map-based land use planning is a better approach than simply one or the other. A point to make here, however, that where the special qualities are not protected under statute then careful consideration should be made of their impact on delivering the visions for each of the settlements. Zoning on area as protected (as shown in Map 1b) could have serious implications on how settlements might be able to embrace the aims of the Park to create sustainable and more socially and economically diverse communities. The balance between the people who live, work and visit the Park and its environment should allow for some development.

2.2 Issue 2 - Resources/Reducing Our Consumption

The current policy approach recognises the importance of the resources found in the Park and provides a policy framework to protect these, setting standards for development and directing the majority of development to the key settlements. The MIR recognises that this approach hasn't helped developers or communities to get a clear picture of the measures set in place to deal with their demands and the demands of climate change.

Again, the suggestion is that a policy and map-based approach identifying sensitive or protected areas that should be avoided as well as opportunities is the CNPA preferred approach. Map 2 (page 27 of the MIR) identifies these areas.

RESPONSE

There are three issues with this approach.

The first is the same as the one mentioned for issue 2 i.e. that zoning an area as protected (as shown in Map 2) could have serious implications on how settlements might be able to embrace the aims of the Park to create sustainable and more socially and economically diverse communities. The balance between the people who live, work and visit the Park and its environment should allow for some development.

The second is that by including geographical areas such as SEPA's 200-year flood maps that are not necessarily accurate will restrict development in perfectly acceptable areas without proper justification. The 200-year flood extent is based on contours rather than site specifics and does not rule out development but simply indicates that flooding may be an issue. If this approach is to be used then the protected zones should be clear and justifiable. A parallel policy approach could help in detailing how and when the nonstatutory or less precise zones may be applied.

The third is that this approach illustrates a layer of protection without a balancing layer of promotion. It doesn't fully answer the criticism that developers and communities don't have a clear picture of the measures set in place to deal with their demands. Settlements require specific strategies to deal with their existing issues and future potential, all set within the aims of the Park. Braemar is one of these settlements - more comment is provided later in this review but in general, if the local economy and businesses are to thrive then more homes (including holiday and retirement homes) are required rather than less. Relying on existing stock and limited housing allocations increases demand in relation to supply, forces prices higher and reduces the opportunity for locals to buy locally.

2.3 Issue 3 -Support for Our Communities

The key question set on this issue is "How and where can we make sure communities have what they need -jobs, tourism options, facilities etc?". The MIR preferred option is to highlight the different communities in the Park and support appropriate opportunities for economic development, services and facilities within them.

RESPONSE

This is a good approach but only where opportunities for development to support economic development and services, and the allocations or policies, are flexible enough to allow for such development to achieve planning consent. Overzealous zoning of protected areas around existing settlements will make this difficult at the very least and in many cases impossible. Past local plans have simply allocated the existing operational business/employment areas for economic development. To be progressive and support appropriate new or expanding business ventures new economic development allocations are required.

The suggestion in this section is that those areas that currently have the greatest visitor pressure should be the areas where new development is focused (Map 3 - Supporting Our Communities). We don't agree that this approach reflects the real opportunities in the Park. Just because Aviemore, for example, has a very high visitor pressure doesn't automatically make it the best place for the highest future growth. Other settlements have key roles to play in the Park and have been losing out historically as a result of being in a different local authority or subject to a strategy that concentrates on the west of the Park. The LDP should be taking a new look at how the Park has developed and how it might develop in the future for the benefit of all of its constituent communities.

2.4 Issue 4- Housing/ Affordable Housing

The difficulties with delivering the right type of affordable housing at the right time in the right place have been well documented and debated over recent years. The CNPA preferred approach (Option 3) is to ensure that the needs of all main and other settlements have some options for future development but to focus new housing on those sites already in adopted local

plans and require a 25% benchmark level of affordable housing. An alternative option (Option 2) is to only identify development sites specifically for 100% affordable housing and nothing else.

RESPONSE

On the face of the preferred approach is more realistic as it allows for mainstream development in settlements and requires a proportion of those to be affordable. This is the traditional model and one that works elsewhere to at least deliver some affordable housing. We can see issues in particular locations - in Braemar, for example, where the existing local plan allocations almost all have consents and agreed levels/types of affordable housing. Local community visioning and events have shown that the type of

affordable housing being provided doesn't necessarily meet local needs. This illustrates a core flaw in this option in specific locations i.e. that historic allocations/consents can't deal with future affordable housing requirements. It can only be future allocations and their respective planning applications that can go some way to provide the right housing to meet local housing need.

The background evidence to housing allocations is included in the MIR background report 1 - Housing and Population. This includes a lot of assumptions that can be debated at length. In summary, however, there are a couple of points worth making:

- The Aberdeenshire area of the Park does not desegregate its Housing Need and Demand Assessment information (The HNDA is prepared on behalf of Aberdeenshire Council not the CNPA) in enough detail for the Park to make any informed decisions. Instead the housing need here is based on LHA waiting lists and average completion rates. Waiting lists are not an accepted evidence of need and completion rates rely on past Local Plan land allocations and consents that could have been artificially limited. The housing information available to the CNPA therefore does not seem to offer a realistic view of housing need and demand in the Aberdeenshire area of the Park and is most likely an under-estimate;
- The issue of holiday homes/second homes also starts to affect housing numbers. In Braemar it has been estimated that maybe 50% of the houses are used in this manner. If that is the case and housing allocations only reflect the need identified in the background paper then what happens when a significant proportion of those are sold as holiday homes? They are removed from the housing supply available to locals and only a proportion of housing to meet local need can be delivered. This again points to a potential under allocation of housing sites. The above two issues have been considered in the 2011 Strategy Options Study for Braemar but these are clear concerns in respect of the preferred option. A solution to this would be to expand the preferred option to allocate completely new housing sites over and above existing consents and local plan allocations. This will assist in meeting housing needs in a more flexible manner. In any event a more detailed study of housing need and demand in the Aberdeenshire area of the Park would be highly beneficial.

2.5 Issue 5 - Spatial Strategy

RESPONSE

We generally support the preferred option set out on page 44: To "Clarify the settlement hierarchy so communities are clear what they are likely to see in the future. This would include land for housing and economic investment."

As with the previous Local Plan the focus is very much on the western side of the Park. We believe that this is unbalanced. The eastern area of the Park requires a specific strategy to improve its offer to those who live, work and visit there. It has huge potential to add value to the aims of the Park but has been overshadowed by the area around Aviemore for decades. The recent Strategic Options Study (2011) for Braemar illustrates some of that potential. There is a clear remit for the PLDP to embrace the opportunities in these areas. The 2011 Braemar Study has provided economic and housing development ideas to assist in meeting the Community Vision and ensure a sustainable future for the village.

This has been published with the MIR for consultation and even though this is ongoing we believe that the options that it contains provide a real opportunity for Braemar that should be reflected in more detail in the PLDP.

Page 42 of the MIR sets out a list of the "Main Settlements" and "Other Settlements". This is too simplistic and we suggest a third category of "intermediate settlements" that would include Braemar.

2.6 Proposed Braemar Settlement Option (Page 66 & 67)

The recent Braemar Strategic Options Study (Braemar SOS, 2011) is mentioned in paragraph 11.6.2 as a long-term view, setting out how the village could develop. The suggestion is that it will not impact on this Local Development Plan review but on future reviews.

RESPONSE

We are of a different view - some of the elements of the Braemar SOS should be included now with the option for future development being recognised now. Although the Braemar SOS also referred to as the Braemar masterplan, has yet to be discussed fully with the local community it identifies key issues and potential solutions to these. It would be useful to have the debate about its content {with the community, with local businesses, with tourism and economic development agencies) and use the outcomes of those discussions to inform the content of the PLDP. If the next Local Development Plan is to take the issues

of community, social and economic services and the right housing in the right place seriously then it has to respond to these in its land use policies and allocations. The proposed land allocations (page 67) rely on existing consents for the most part with a single new site for a few houses identified on Chapel Brae. An additional medium term site for housing is identified further up Chapel Brae. We obviously support the inclusion of these but feel that the plan has not allocated enough land to deal with housing needs over the next 5-10 years. Indeed, the medium-term allocation could be brought forward into the first 5-year period.

Employment sites are even fewer. These include a small brownfield site and an existing retail/commercial centre. If Braemar is to thrive as a sustainable village, encourage economically active families to stay and maintain and promote local services then these two allocations are not adequate. Again, the Braemar SOS offers some alternatives to these that we believe are more ambitious but potentially achievable. One of the key issues raised local is the lack of commercial space for local businesses to expand into - the CNPA preferred approach doesn't help overcome that current problem.

The approach that should be preferred is to recognise the existing consents, allocate the two housing sites already identified plus more land for housing and economic uses and coordinate the short, medium and longer-term options by embracing the ideas in the Braemar Masterplan (subject to further consultation and perhaps more detailed examination of particular options). The existing consents will not deliver affordable houses to meet current need as the negotiation over that took place some years ago.

Only new allocations and consents can do that. The PLDP needs to be far more ambitious if it is going to tackle the issues raised in the Braemar Community Vision.

2.7 Issue 6- Support for Rural Areas

The preferred approach for other settlements and areas outwith the key and other settlements is to support growth that matches historic growth patterns and use the landscape character assessment to protect important rural areas from inappropriate development.

RESPONSE

Some rural areas may have seen no growth over recent years. Using historic growth pattern as the main justification for future growth is unlikely to meet the aspirations of these communities or reflect what may actually be perfectly acceptable development in a particular location. The

approach should allow for limited growth in appropriate locations even where, historically, there may have been none for a while.

2.8 Other Issues

The MIR also identifies other issues that they want to carry forward from the last local Plan.

These are:

- Cultural Heritage
- Developer Contributions
- Design
- Development Standards
- House Extensions and Alterations
- Replacements Houses
- Conversion and Reuse of existing vernacular buildings
- Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
- Tourism Related Development

The MIR asks whether we agree that these topics should be carried forward as they are or the general direction given under these topics be revisited.

RESPONSE

For the most part these could easily be carried forward but should be generally reviewed to make sure that they are in line with national policy. In particular the issue of Developer Contributions and its impact of the deliverability of development is one that is currently subject to extensive debate.

3.0 Conclusion

Overall the MIR does identify key issues that the local Development Plan should tackle and is a good summary of the key issues. The Mar Estate is both interested in the generality of the LDP and in the future of Braemar as a sustainable community at the heart of the Park.

A joint masterplan approach was carried out in 2011 (Braemar Strategic Options Study) with input from the CNPA planning officers, local community representatives, and Mar and Invercauld Estates. Its starting point was the agreed Community Vision with the aim of identifying potential physical and development interventions that could help achieve that vision. This masterplan approach has identified a range of development options for Braemar across tourism, business support, leisure and housing. These require further debate locally but are a good starting point to establish a forward-looking development strategy for Braemar. We have included comments in respect of specific issues in this paper on the masterplan but feel that its findings should be encompassed in greater detail in the PLDP. We endorse the recommendations of the Stage 2 Strategic Options (masterplanning) report on further actions required as these will help inform future LDP strategy for Braemar.

Other comments on key issues have been included in the above sections. We are happy to discuss these in greater depth if helpful.

Ref 80 Name Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group

Response

ISSUE 1 SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE PARK

The MIR provides a number of pieces of information upon which the issue of protecting the special qualities is to be determined. The special qualities themselves (Table 1), the Wildness map (1a) and the other information map (1b) and also Map 2. All are considered inadequate. Special Qualities As outlined in our response to the draft National Park Plan, the Cairngorms Campaign sees no reason to replace the fairly detailed descriptions given in the NPP 2007 (pp.

25-27), which at least attempted to describe in some depth a range of special qualities, albeit incompletely (it failed, for example, to mention birch and juniper woodlands) with the brief outlines given in the draft NPP. It is, of course, the case that the briefer and more general the description of a quality is, the easier it is to ignore it and the more difficult it is to point out that a proposal may damage it.

The CNPA's descriptions of the special qualities provide little of any substance whereby they can be adequately recognised and protected. Table 2.1 and the accompanying text should not read like an exercise in poetic phraseology, but should be a tool whereby the special qualities are adequately and precisely described, so that their condition might be properly recognised and monitored, and thereby protected and enhanced.

The entire section on special qualities in the MIR (pp.17-20) is completely unacceptable, and should be re-written, based on the special qualities section of the NPP 2007.

The Wildness Map is of far too small a scale to provide adequate information and we also have considerable misgivings concerning the accuracy of the map in identifying wild land correctly. It appears, rather conveniently, to identify almost all areas where there is any potential for development as "low" wildness. That being the case, two questions arise:

1. How can the Wildness Map provide any useful discriminatory value for developers in choosing potential development sites, or for the CNPA in assessing them, when almost all such sites have the same wildness score?

2. is the real intention of the Wildness Map simply therefore to provide any potential developer with a positive score as far as development is concerned? Almost all potential developers will be able to claim that their proposed development has a low wildness score and is therefore on that issue acceptable, even though in reality their proposal might have significant consequences for wildness.

Map 1b The scale used makes detail and specific sites illegible and the map is hopelessly cluttered. The categories chosen for native woodland seem curious, and are anyway unrecognisable on Map 1b.

The public are placed at a significant disadvantage because of these issues and the CNPA does not appear to have provided any justification for providing maps that inhibit proper engagement of the public in a consultation document. Equivalent concerns regarding such information were raised about the first Local Plan during its consultation stage.

The Cairngorms Campaign has no confidence in the treatment of Issue 1 by the CNPA, as outlined in the MIR.

Question 1 - We have no confidence that either Option 1 or Option 2 will be effective in protecting the special qualities when faced with the juggernaut of rapidly expanding housing and population. The CNPA has adopted an unrealistic position: that of pretending that Options can be effective when there is no reasonable prospect of that being the case. The CNPA thereby neglects its statutory duties and brings itself into disrepute.

ISSUE 2 - RESOURCES/REDUCING OUR CONSUMPTION

Question 2

It has not been possible to find the interactive form of Map 2 p.27 – it does not appear to exist. If it does exist then the exact url should be provided, not merely the basic url of the CNPA website.

The questions asked do not seem to bear much relation to the preamble, or express clearly what is being asked.

Moreover, to pretend that the CNPA is responding to the need to reduce consumption whilst simultaneously promoting an unsustainable rapid growth in housing, particularly one based upon building more than 75% open market luxury houses to cater for demand for second/holiday/retirement/commuter houses, is absurd. It is analogous to a householder who runs a large car and turns the central heating up, deluding himself that he is saving the planet by installing a couple of low energy light bulbs.

We would be concerned were any mechanism to imply "that the areas of opportunity have unconstrained options for development" as indicated might be the case for Option 2, so that is certainly not supported.

Otherwise, the Cairngorms Campaign can see little merit in engaging with this question whilst the CNPA pursues other policies that will make any gains from these policies insignificant.

ISSUE 4 - HOUSING/AFFORDABLE HOUSING

This section starts with the statement:

"The dominance of (these) low paid sectors means that many of the people working in the Park are relatively worse off to (sic) people in other parts of Scotland."

This statement gives the impression that the park residents are economically disadvantaged compared to those who live in other parts of Scotland. However, such an impression is misleading. As stated in the response to the draft National Park Plan:

"The information, such as it is, provided by the CNPA on the economic status of CNP residents appears at odds with the results of the 2001 census, some of which is shown in the following Table:

(Table supplied showing results from 2001 census)

This information, albeit awaiting updating from the 2011 census, indicates that in these settlements CNP residents generally enjoy more employment and are healthier and wealthier than in the rest of Scotland, and usually in the rest of Highland also. In addition to these material comforts, CNP residents also enjoy the benefits of living in a relatively crime free and unpolluted environment of outstanding quality."

It would be surprising if, a decade after this information was provided by the 2001 Census and eight years after the formation of the national park, the relative material condition of park residents had substantially deteriorated. The fact is that this information, albeit incomplete, provides no support for the suggestion that park residents are on average worse off than people elsewhere in Scotland.

Question 4

Do you agree with the preferred option?

NO. We firmly reject Option 3.

The preferred Option 3 decreases the proportion of affordable housing built compared with recent years. It means that, in order to cater for the number of affordable houses required, even more open market houses will be built, meaning even more environmental damage in the form of unsympathetic cramming and expansion of established villages. That will further erode their

character and setting and cause further imbalance in the social structure as such open market housing is almost exclusively occupied by wealthy people from elsewhere. For that Option to be the preferred one by a National Park Authority charged with the statutory duty of conserving and enhancing both the natural and the cultural heritage of the national park is not acceptable.

How does encouraging in-migration of large numbers of wealthy individuals from elsewhere conserve and enhance the cultural heritage of Highland villages?

How does increasing the size of such villages by substantial amounts with luxury housing conserve and enhance their character and setting?

When many of these villages are surrounded by land of high environmental quality, how does covering these areas with unnecessary luxury houses conserve and enhance the natural heritage?

The answer to all of these questions is obviously that it does not. Yet the CNPA does not address these questions.

Nor does the CNPA provide any analysis of the previous twenty years, during which time a policy of trying to provide about 25-40% of affordable houses in developments has been in operation.

- how many affordable houses have been built in that time in what is now the CNP, and how many of them were and are occupied by local people?
- in other words, how successful or otherwise has the 25-40% policy been?
- how does the present situation with respect to need for affordable housing by local people compare with the situation twenty years ago? Are things better or worse after twenty years of this policy?

The CNPA seems unable to answer these questions, yet is proposing to continue a policy that, it appears, will actually produce a lower proportion of affordable houses.

This appears to the Cairngorms Campaign as a dereliction of the duty of the CNPA towards its statutory duties.

The effects of this supposed 25-40% policy over the last twenty years can now be seen on the ground and have caused considerable disquiet and adverse comment amongst locals and visitors alike.

- areas of land that were available (albeit of varying suitability) within and close to settlements, which could have been used for affordable housing, have been largely consumed by luxury houses so that such land is no longer available. Future growth is thus pushed into less and less suitable locations, frequently onto land of high environmental value, including ancient woodland, causing more environmental damage and more outrage amongst the villagers effected.
- landowners have become used to selling plots at greatly inflated prices. The price of a plot is a substantial proportion of the cost of a putative affordable house, and a large part of the reason why such affordable houses are not built. A landowner is not easily persuaded to reduce the price of a plot if he considers that there is a good chance of having a luxury house built upon it and he has become accustomed to obtaining it. In other words, the existence of the temptation of luxury houses diminishes the incentive to allow the building of affordable houses.

Moreover, the practice, to some extent encouraged by the 25-40% policy, of allocating areas for relatively very large numbers of houses in large estates has

- impacted negatively on small local builders who cannot compete with large building companies from outwith the CNP and
- had a hugely negative impact on the character and setting of villages.

The continuation of this damaging 'business as usual' approach to housing policy is based on the "Main Issues Report - Background Evidence 1 Housing and Population", which claims that it "sets out the rationale for the new housing requirements identified in the Main Issues Report."

Except that it does not. The rationale is not set out: it is assumed, without explanation or justification, let alone justification in terms of the aims of the national park. That assumed rationale is this: the CNPA will accept the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) published projections for both population and housing in the Cairngorms National Park in 2010 and use them as the basis of its Local Development Plan.

However, those GROS figures for population and housing are projections – they are not predictions, and they are certainly not prescriptions. This is made clear, should there be any doubt, within the "Background Evidence 1 Housing and Population" paper, which states,

"The projections to the year 2033, are based on the estimated population of the Park in mid 2008 (the base year for the projections), are trend based, and do not take into account future policy."(para.3.4 p.10). Further, "They are informed by past trends and the scale of housing development that has occurred previously. The household projections should therefore be used to provide a general indication of how households within the Park may change over time." (para.4.2 p.14) [our emphases]

Those "past trends" are, of course, the history of what has happened in what is now the Cairngorms National Park over the years up to 2008. As a rough guide to what happened in Badenoch and Strathspey compared to the rest of Highland the following information is from the 2001 Census:

(table supplied of % age change from 2001 census)

It will be noticed that Badenoch and Strathspey had the highest decadal population growth rate (at 6.86%) of any area in Highland from 1991-2001. This represents a doubling of population in less than a century and a growth rate greater than any other rural district in Scotland and is completely at odds with growth rates elsewhere in Europe within National Parks. It was that rapid, unsustainable, rate of growth in housing and population that gave rise to much of the impetus towards establishing the Cairngorms National Park, yet it is that large unsustainable trend in both population and housing growth that has contributed to the present GROS projections.

So, the situation is that the GROS projection, upon which the CNPA has based its housing need calculations within its MIR, is itself largely based on the rapid and unsustainable period of housing and population growth up to 2008. That period has already caused considerable damage to villages and aspects of the natural heritage in the land surrounding them. This was already evident in 1991, when the then Highland Regional Council, in its First Draft Local Plan stated (with reference to Badenoch and Strathspey):

"concern is emerging about the rate and scale of change in established villages. Unsympathetic cramming and expansion of communities is eroding their character and setting, threatening to overwhelm facilities, or creating imbalances in the social structure."

Since that time, and up to the time used by GROS, the following numbers of new houses have been built in Badenoch and Strathspey, the great majority of which have been within and around those established villages (data from Highland Council):
(table supplied of number of houses built 1991 - 2008)

That, twenty years later, little of such concern or awareness as expressed by Highland Regional Council in 1991 is evident within the CNPA's MIR, is wholly unacceptable. Indeed, it appears that the CNPA has a history of simply not understanding the situation, or has tried deliberately to mislead the public on this issue, because in its 2007 Deposit Local Plan the CNPA stated, "For a variety of reasons, supply of new housing has been limited in the Cairngorms National Park area during the past five years. The limited supply of effective land has meant that, in Badenoch and Strathspey in particular, fewer homes have been built than were anticipated in the Development Plan." (para.5.30 p.41, Deposit Local Plan 2007):

The truth is that the information in the above table shows that in the period 1991-2002 inc. the rate of house building averaged 82 per year (987/12) and increased to 133 per year (664/5) from 2003-2007, an increase of 62% in house building during the period in which the CNPA claimed that it was "limited".

Similarly, the 2001 HC Structure Plan gave a target of 1050 houses for the first ten years of the period 1998-2017, ie 105 houses per year. That figure was exceeded by 27% during the period 2003-2007, the period in which the CNPA claimed that "fewer" homes had been built. The above CNPA statement is untrue.

That the CNPA should make these false statements about a matter of such importance to the people of Badenoch and Strathspey, and in the face of widespread concern about excessive development in the Cairngorms National Park, is wholly unacceptable.

Instead of using the GROS figures as a prescription of what must happen, the CNPA should use them correctly: as a warning of what likely will happen if present trends continue. As emphasised by the Reporters' to the Local Plan Inquiry Report - December 2009, in the context of considering the relevance of previous plans,

"there is no requirement for slavish compliance with any of [the] terms of these plans because they all predate the designation of the Cairngorms National Park, so that they contain policies and proposals that apply to areas with a different geographic focus and that are not based on the 4 National Park aims described above. In short, it is open to the CNPLP to take a different approach to that of the structure plans where the CNPP 2007 provides alternative material guidance or direction."(para.1.8 p.2)

If there is no requirement for compliance with the terms of previous plans by the CNPA, how can there be any requirement to comply with the results of those former plans, namely the housing and population figures that provide the basis of the GROS projections, particularly when no evidence is forthcoming concerning the efficacy of those plans in improving the situation with respect to affordable housing for local people?

Similar considerations apply to the Housing Need Demands Assessments from the surrounding five local authorities. There is no requirement for the CNPA to adopt these figures. Indeed, how could it be otherwise? The Cairngorms National Park was established by statute as a special place, with the CNPA charged with the production of its development plan, which must comply with its National Park Plan and which must be in line with the four aims of the park. There is no requirement for the CNPA to follow slavishly the HNDAs of surrounding local authorities, any

more than there is to follow their plans. Quite the opposite: the establishment of the Cairngorms National Park was supposed to herald a change in how things are done here, not to entrench a speculative housing bubble ever more firmly onto an already deeply stressed environment. In proposing to act this way, the CNPA is misdirecting itself.

Indeed, the above considerations are implicitly acknowledged by the CNPA since the Option 2 to “Focus all new development on the provision of affordable housing” would almost certainly mean that the GROS targets would not be met, yet that Option 2 clearly remains a possibility.

The Cairngorms Campaign supports Option 2 as a first step towards tackling this problem, but firmly believes that only the adoption of residency criteria, whereby all new-build housing is reserved for those with a national park connection (along the lines outlined in Policy 38d p.54 of the CNPA 2005 Consultative Draft Local Plan) will enable the CNPA to justly claim that it is making a determined attempt to achieve its statutory responsibilities with respect to the four aims of the park and the requirement to give greater weight to the first aim in the event of a conflict.

The crucial decision for the CNPA is whether to grasp this nettle now or to continue with something like business as usual, as Option 1 and 3 provide. If the CNPA takes the latter course the National Park will continue to suffer attrition of and damage to its natural and cultural heritage, until the evidence and local and national outrage becomes so overwhelming that it will be forced to change direction. That would be a disaster for the National Park and a disaster for the CNPA of historic proportions.

ISSUE 5 - SPATIAL STRATEGY

Question 5

The Cairngorms Campaign accepts the need for a settlement hierarchy as outlined in the MIR, and accepts that very nearly all development should occur within settlement boundaries.

However, in order for communities to be clear what they are likely to see in the future then it is also necessary for the settlement boundaries to be permanently established. Unless this is done the settlements will simply become centres of urban sprawl, with communities no more at ease with respect to changes in their environment than were development to be allowed elsewhere. For communities in settlements within a national park to be left witnessing an endless spectre of urban sprawl around them – which is what Options 1 and, even more so, Option 3 of Question 4 promises - is completely unacceptable.

In short, unless Option 1 of Question 5 includes a provision for making the settlement boundaries permanent, then any pretence that this measure would ensure that “communities are clear what they are likely to see in the future” is misleading and illusory.

For the avoidance of doubt, the acceptance by the Cairngorms Campaign of the need for a settlement hierarchy, should not be considered to have any implications with regard to the other policy approaches mentioned in this section, namely An Camas Mor, dualling of the A9 and IT developments.

MAIN SETTLEMENTS

All settlement maps.

We are concerned that the ENV allocations that appear in the adopted CNPLP do not exist in

the MIR.

Similarly, the settlement boundaries that appear in the adopted CNPLP do not exist in the MIR. We regard it as appropriate to treat these as main issues. We note that housing allocations are being carried over from the CNPLP in MIR, but environment allocations are not.

We object to the presentation of the maps. The ED areas depict planned and existing development using the same symbol. This renders the maps uninformative, making it impossible for the public to establish the extent to which ED sites extend beyond existing development. The exact boundary of the H areas is impossible to determine from the maps. This does not allow the public, developers or the CNPA partners to check the exact accuracy of the maps in the MIR.

It is unhelpful that the H allocations are not numbered making it hard to refer to them individually. Meaningful consultation relies on effective sharing of information, which is not achieved in the presentation of these maps.

10.3 An Camas Mòr

10.3.2 We strongly object to this paragraph. We do not consider that ACM represents a 'sustainable' community and do not consider the CNPA has provided any reasonable justification for the view that it will prove to be 'sustainable'. The CNPA gives the impression that they consider every other community in B&S has vulnerabilities in terms of sustainability. It would seem reasonable to consider that a new community would have greater vulnerability than established settlements. The established settlements of B&S have proven track records of sustaining themselves, some for over hundreds of years, and through many changes.

We object to statement that ACM 'will meet growth demands over the next 20 years'. The CNPA has not justified why the 'demand' is a relevant consideration for the MIR.

We object to the statement asserting that ACM will provide a vibrant, balanced community. This appears to us to be aspirational and the CNPA does not provide a reasonable justification for taking such a view. It is unclear why the CNPA considers that ACM will provide a demographically balanced community in the long term.

We object to the statement that ACM will set an outstanding example of what is possible in a National Park context. This vague statement is not supported by credible justification. We do not consider that ACM is an appropriate development in a National Park context.

10.3.6 There is no guarantee that ACM will provide a school or a full and active community.

Question 6

Do you agree with the preferred option?

No, the Cairngorms Campaign objects to all of the housing allocations associated with An Camas Mor, because of its conflict with all four Aims of the National Park. Such scale of development within a National Scenic Area and National Park, and so close to designated European Sites, is unacceptable and is destructive of outstanding environmental assets. The habitats impacted on and the outstanding biodiversity values of the site are features that the CNPA should be seeking to protect and enhance.

10.4 Aviemore

10.4.2 " With up to 316 houses, on a variety of sites, having permission they will provide for the demand for new housing for the next plan period and beyond."

We object to this sentence. The CNPA should not be seeking to meet the 'demand for new housing'. The CNPA has not justified taking a 'demand driven' approach to housing.

10.4.3 We disagree that 'capacity for some further growth remains on the land identified in the Local Plan.' To build on this remaining land comes at a high environmental and social cost. Further, the CNPA has not properly identified limits to growth nor established where a balance lies between built development and retaining high quality environment and the amenities and

benefits this provides.

ED1 and ED2. We strongly object to both these allocations:

ED1. The north end of ED1, beyond the boundary fence of the existing industrial units (Spey Valley Hire etc) is an area of semi natural and long established grassland, with some regenerating and established birch – classic Strathspey habitat and landscape. We find it incomprehensible that the CNPA considers it desirable to build industrial units on such a site. This is an area of high quality environment and is immediately adjacent to further extremely high quality habitats associated with the burn and surrounding woodland.

Two species of UK red listed vascular plants have been recorded on the site, one classed as endangered, the other as vulnerable. There would appear to be potential for both to extend. There is a significant assemblage of waxcaps (Hygrocybe species), > 6 species in one visit and including one PERL species. There are food-plants for some SBL butterfly species and the site would appear to be rich in invertebrates including bumblebees. In addition to a high density of rabbits (prey for EPS wildcat) there is evidence of use of the site by brown hare. The site provides foraging habitat for bats, and otter signs have been found near the site. There are excellent views of the hills from the site, and the site is an important part of this high quality landscape.

Turning a superb piece of habitat for wildlife, landscape and recreation into an industrial unit conflicts with all four Aims of the Park.

Development would impact on the quality of experience for users of the Speyside Way and would degrade views for passengers on both railway lines.

We also consider this piece of land provides a buffer between the industrial site and the land to the north.

The CNPA has provided no reasoned argument of how the loss of this ground is justified in terms of the level of economic growth that it would support with industrial development on it. The CNPA also does not provide an assessment of the economic value of this site as it is, compared to the economic value if it were industrialised.

ED2. We note that ED2 extends further south than a similar allocation in the HC B&S Local Plan. The southern, undeveloped part of this allocation is an important area of semi-natural habitat including grassland, heathland, birch, aspen, juniper and Scots pine. It is used by bats.

It is readily accessible to many people and provides a good area for informal recreation including bikes and dog walking for which it is currently used.

Its relatively quiet, secluded and natural character provides an area where people can experience a sense of 'getting away from it all' right in the heart of Aviemore. The CNPP 2007 and draft NPP emphasise the importance of wildness in the CNP. We consider that wild and natural qualities in the countryside are vital qualities that play a significant role in enjoyment of the countryside.

In a 'Park for all' the CNPA should be prioritising the retention of such areas in the environs of communities, so that people can experience relatively natural, unspoilt areas, getting away from it all and quiet solitude close to their homes, rather than this being an experience available only to those who can go to the remoter parts of the NP.

Further, these kinds of sites are important for all ages. The southern part of ED2 occupies a highly strategic position being close to the new primary school and accessible on foot from the school. It would provide a highly valuable outdoor educational area accessible within walking distance of the school. It is worth noting that the proximity of the present primary school to Milton Wood, a high quality environment, facilitates delivering a high quality of environmental education at present.

Outdoor education is increasingly emphasised in the Curriculum for Excellence. The CNPA is investing in promoting the CNP as an area for education, yet at the same time the CNPA appears blind to the value of this site for this very purpose. Such a mismatch fuels the considered opinion that the CNPA favours economic development over the environment and community interests.

The variety of habitats, their ecological high quality and relative naturalness, and the interesting features of ecological succession at this site, make it of outstanding value for environmental education. These features cannot be reproduced.

The cumulative impact of land use changes at Aviemore should be considered by the CNPA. In recent years the large area associated with the new golf course has been substantially lost for walking and the landscape has been significantly downgraded; the Achantoul burn area has acquired a far more suburban character with the new housing development of Lochan Mor and its landscape quality and views have been degraded; the site at High Burnside has been lost for recreation and the highly attractive partially wooded landscape and the course of the previously very natural burn it supported have been destroyed.

These present and future losses of areas of quality countryside are taking place alongside an increased population, meaning that significantly more people are seeking access in a seriously diminished area of lower quality countryside. We consider this to be the opposite of what the CNPA was established to do, and runs counter to many statements in the CNPP which emphasise that the high standard of the environment is the fundamental quality for which the CNP was designated.

In short, we strongly object to all these housing allocations which conflict with all four Aims of the Park.

Question 7

Do you agree with the preferred option?

The Cairngorms Campaign does not agree with the preferred option. We do not consider that the MIR provides for the right amount of growth in Aviemore. We consider it provides for far too much housing and built development at the expense of valuable countryside.

10.6 Grantown-on-Spey

We object to the housing allocation. We are concerned that this would involve a loss and degradation of significant habitats and landscape qualities and that there has not been sufficient consideration given to the environmental costs of developing this site. This allocation jeopardises the viability of adjacent wetland habitat and has potential implications for the River Spey SAC and Anagach Woods SPA which should be assessed before any allocation is made. We are concerned that the Achnaganolin ED allocation is in very close proximity to habitats that are of high value for both landscape and biodiversity. We are concerned that the quality of such habitats should in no way be compromised by the industrial estate.

Question 9

Do you agree with the preferred option?

We do not agree with the preferred option (except in so far as it identifies no additional development land.)

10.7 Kingussie

We object to the east housing allocation which conflicts with all four Aims of the National Park. We do not consider the surveys undertaken are sufficient to establish the use of the site by European Protected Species. We consider the scale to be excessive. This allocation converts lowland agricultural land to built development. Such habitat contributes to the landscape quality

Question 10

Do you agree with the preferred option?

We do not support the preferred option. The MIR does not provide for the right amount of growth, but provides for an excessive amount of growth.

10.8 Newtonmore

We agree with the community view expressed in the MIR, that 'Small groupings of new dwellings are seen as the preferred way to provide for the need'. The MIR provides no reasoned justification for allocating large groupings of new dwellings.

The housing allocations convert lowland agricultural land to built development: a direct loss of lowland agricultural land. Such habitat in the CNP can support important biodiversity, e.g. Brown hares and birds of UK conservation concern, and contributes to the landscape quality.

Question 11

Do you agree with the preferred option?

We do not agree with either the preferred option or the alternative option as we consider both options provide an excessive scale of housing.

We consider the alternative option is preferable to the preferred option because it promotes a smaller scale of development.

11 Other Settlements

11.3 'It [the MIR] focuses on those [other settlements] where there is greatest pressure for development.'

We object to this statement. We consider it gives a significantly exaggerated impression of the need for development and moreover the CNPA does not provide justification for any such "great" pressure. We do not believe any such great pressure exists.

11.5 Boat of Garten

We object to all housing allocations except on the old village hall site. We strongly support allocating this site for housing. The other housing allocations include habitats that support important biodiversity including invertebrate interest. We are concerned at the paucity of survey work at this stage and consider that such survey work needs to precede making allocations (e.g. due to conflict with the first Aim of the National Park). The south east housing allocation site would convert native Scots pine woodland into built development. It would provide an insecure housing boundary that it can be anticipated would lead to further loss of woodland to the west and south. The loss to housing of this site would drive increasing recreational disturbance further into the wood and into more sensitive parts of the wood with predictable adverse impacts on

capercaillie, an Annex 1 species.

We are concerned that both of the westerly allocations provide insecure development boundaries that would be liable to lead to further housing development to the west and north and consequent further loss of habitat.

The combined allocations would represent a significant population increase in the village, with predictable increase in recreational disturbance to capercaillie in Boat Wood.

There is a muddle over whether the housing proposed is short term or short and medium term. The map indicates it is all short 0-5 years; whereas the preferred option text states it is short and medium term.

Question 13

Do you agree with the preferred option?

We do not support the preferred option or the alternative option.

11.8 Carr-Bridge

We object to the housing allocations, which conflict with all four Aims of the park and represent excessive scale of development. The habitats impacted on, which include priority habitats, support significant biodiversity including priority species and Scottish Biodiversity List species. The European Protected Species wildcat may use the site and bats (also EPS) are known to use the site. Capercaillie are known to use the nearby woodland. This allocation would significantly increase the recreational disturbance in the surrounding woodland which can be reasonably predicted to impact on Natura interest.

Question 16

Do you agree with the preferred option?

We do not agree with the preferred option.

11.9 Cromdale

We object to the two medium and long term housing allocations which represent an excessive scale of development and a loss of lowland agricultural land. Such habitat in the CNP can support important biodiversity, e.g. Brown hares and birds of UK conservation concern.

11.12 Dulnain Bridge

We object to housing allocations which represent an excessive scale and pace of development. The southern housing allocation would impact on Curr Wood which supports capercaillie and may support wildcat, a European Protected Species and would result in increased recreational disturbance in this wood. It does not provide a robust settlement boundary and would be liable to lead to further expansion of the settlement to the south west.

11.14 Kincaig

We object to housing allocation and to ED1, both of which conflict with all four Aims of the Park. The housing allocation represents a loss of lowland agricultural land. This contradicts targets in both National Park Plans 2007 and draft 2012.

The area of natural, native birch woodland within the site supports a rich ground layer and is of potential invertebrate interest. This is an extension of the woodland habitat that is on the other side of the railway line that is known to be of at least regional importance for its important invertebrate interest. For example, it supports the aspen-dependent flagship species *Hammarschmidtia*.

Assuming that the fenced area of birch within the housing allocation would not be directly built on (which would obviously destroy it), it would nevertheless be damaged as a result of a development through, inter alia, the spread of alien invasive species from gardens, lawn

clippings and other garden waste being dumped, and other effects.

A development here would predictably increase recreational use of the woodland across the railway line, which would impact negatively on this important area e.g. through increased trampling effects of people and soil nutrient changes due to dogs.

The housing allocation adds a significant area of housing in the next 5 years, on top of the 28 houses recently built in Macbean Road, and further houses recently built nearer the community hall. This is an unsustainable and excessive scale and pace of development.

ED1 is partly natural deciduous woodland with birch and aspen, and a rich ground vegetation with heather and blaeberry. The site includes mature and regenerating aspen. Both National Park Plans aim to enhance aspen; to include the woodland area of the ED1 site contradicts this CNPP target.

The site is classic landscape with well spaced, native trees forming a very natural area of open woodland, interspersed with open rough grassland; it provides a valuable juxtaposition of these two habitats. The grassland includes Devil's Bit Scabious and Pignut, both plants that support specific Cairngorms invertebrates. This site provides continuity with the aspen and birch on both sides of the railway line and near the school. In a brief visit we recorded Song Thrush and Dunnock, both declining species.

Areas of natural woodland habitat are a particularly significant component of the Cairngorms straths landscape. Such areas are very attractive in the landscape, rich in biodiversity, and characteristic of the locality.

Close to the site a path from the access road underpass to the school provides a very attractive route both to the school and as part of several routes e.g. linking with the path opposite the school leading to the woods and Speybank. The development of this site would reduce the quality of experience of this path.

The development of this site would further impact on the adjacent burn, a tributary of the Spey. This burn would potentially be impacted on for the entire stretch from the H site through to this one. It is likely to be used by otters, a qualifying feature of the Spey & Tributaries SAC.

Question 22

Do you agree with the preferred option?

We do not agree with the preferred option.

11.15 Nethy Bridge

We object to all the housing allocations which conflict with all four Aims of the Park and represent an excessive scale of development. We also object to the economic development allocation previously made in School Wood (adopted CNPLP), which conflicts with all four Aims of the Park. We are puzzled as to why the industrial development site is not distinguished on the map.

Question 23

Do you agree with the preferred option?

We disagree with the preferred option. We do not consider that built development should be allocated in an Ancient Woodland site.

BSCG welcomes the opportunity to comment on all aspects of the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan Main Issues Report Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report dated 25 July 2011. In general terms we consider that this Report would benefit from more rigour, breadth, depth and a much fuller and more transparent information base. We see it as a role of a park authority to itself proactively help to build an improved foundation of ecological understanding of the distinctive and too often threatened natural heritage of the Cairngorms area.

It is foolhardy to blunder through a minefield with eyes closed. Recklessly failing to be alert to the richness and sensitivity of significant habitats in areas potentially inviting to development somewhat similiary runs very serious risks in relation to undesired ecological outcomes. In a world where there is a biodiversity crisis concentrating limited conservation resources into safeguarding and appropriately maintaining biodiversity hot spots such as abound in parts of the Cairngorms area, often in precisely those areas inviting to development in the Straths, offers a win-win path to biodiversity conservation. In areas as rich in biodiversity as Badenoch and Strathspey we consider careful environmental assessments deserve a great deal of attention.

1.1 - We welcome recognition of the fundamental observation that the CNPAs plans lead to effects on the environment

1.2 - We welcome reference to the legal obligation on the CNPA to produce this report. We note that the extent to which information on the likely effects is available to accurately inform public consultation inevitably depends on quality of information available and of the skilled interpretation of relevant information. Inconsistent and incomplete information can thus be viewed as a concern. Elsewhere we detail examples of concerns relating to natura site condition surrounding discrepancy between information available on line (via Sitelink) and in supporting information relating to Natura Sites in the NPP

1.3 - We disagree with the understatement that aspects of the plan "could" have negative "effect". We suggest would have negative effects as more realistically descriptive. We therefore object to the unmodified statement considering it innacurate. However we welcome a reference to ecosystems and consider the CNPA should be thinking in terms of ecosystems and complex sometimes sensitive systems.

1.4 & 1.5 - We suggest this overall conclusion about no clear negative effects is unduly optimistic and caution that uncertain effects can all too readily turn out to be highly negative. Conclusions we suggest need to be frequently reviewed in the light of the newest and most complete evidence. We do not want to see the CNPA falling into any trap that makes unwarranted assumptions that neglect costs to environmental interests and question that the precautionary principle is being applied if uncertain effects are never assumed potentially seriously negative. Given a high degree of uncertainty grounds for caution in drawing sweeping conclusions seem to us to be strong.

We welcome a screening out approach however the bald claim that "Only allocations that do not pose unacceptable risks to ecology or landscape were considered for inclusion in the Plan" seems far from persuasive. The Information base relevant to evaluating judgements made on this question needs to be stronger and given a high degree of uncertainty in assessing likely effects of options we urge a precautionary approach.

We welcome reference to information provision. The bullet point relating to use of design statements should be reworded, if it is to be retained, reference to these needing to be fully informed is desirable. It should not be implied that design statements by themselves ensure sensitive and appropriate outcomes.

We welcome the commitment that further reporting relating to assessing the environmental effects of proposals taken forward can be anticipated. We consider such reporting will be seriously disadvantaged if other work including revision of the Cairngorms LBAP and far more ecological baseline condition monitoring continues to be neglected and relevant findings are not fully available to provide up to date understanding of key environmental issues.

2.1 - We generally welcome the approach in these bullet points. On public participation we consider it is important that this is well informed.

3.12 - We support this statement and fully agree in the value of the ecosystems approach for example in assisting understanding of important issues .

3.16 - We welcome some of the recognition of value of enclosed farmlands for example as both

breeding and feeding habitat for wading birds. We also note farmland in parts of the National Park can be used by mammals like wildcats and brown hares. Some farmland and grassland supports significant assemblages of grassland fungi provides habitat for wild flowers including nationally scarce species and can have great value for invertebrates.

We do not consider that it is accurate to indicate that there are 'many' designated woodlands or that all those that should be designated have been. We further question that there is necessarily a particularly wide variety of woodland types. However we certainly consider some of the special importance of our woodlands resides in the presence of particular strongholds of sometimes a few types of woodland like native pinewood.

We welcome reference to the Cairngorms being internationally famous for mountain and moorland habitats but note such fame also extends to for example some of the other habitats for example woodlands like native pinewood habitats and wetlands such as some of the habitats associated with the River Spey). Some rich mosaic habitats for example at lower altitudes also merit recognition.

With respect to areas referred to as urban we note that these tend to be at lower elevations that can be important for biodiversity interests and for species and habitats that are unable to survive relatively hostile conditions at higher elevation. It does not seem appropriate to us to overemphasise the relatively small area of land that is urban as a proportion of the urban as land above the treeline in the Cairngorms is not appropriate for urban development.

We welcome the reference to habitats with significant stores of carbon. We note some of these such as the relatively rare habitat of bog woodland can be fragile and vulnerable to inappropriate management.

Table 8 - We are puzzled that pollination services are not mentioned for example under ecosystem services that enclose farmland for example can be good for. This is particularly so given that flower rich meadows and wayside habitat in Strathspey are important for example to pollinators including bees that in the case of for example the blaeberry bee also use other habitats such as pinewood and moorland. In this respect we note pollination is referred to under woodlands but note this can be of plants in other habitats (and not just "woodland species").

Ref 81 Name Alison Day

Response

Issue 4- Question 4

I agree partly with Option 2.

Affordable housing is needed in Ballater for local people.

Affordable housing should be and could be integrated into the village. This would help to maintain the atmosphere of the village, which is very important for people living in and visiting the village.

Integrated affordable housing could use the present services, which could reduce the price of building.

There are also existing buildings which could be renovated to provide affordable housing If I had to live in affordable housing I would not like to be a very small part of a big new private housing estate- would you?

The above is a far more sensible option, as very little extra private housing is needed- see Issue 5.

Issue 5 Ballater- Question 8

I do not agree with your preferred and only option.

I can see no valid reason why you think Ballater needs so many new houses in the future. I feel this is the opposite of paragraph 9.1. There is very little additional employment opportunity

locally for people who could afford to buy private houses. The majority of people who bought new houses would probably need to drive quite a distance to work, which is also against present "green" ideals and this should be taken into consideration.

New housing should be built as close as possible to employment possibilities. Any new housing would no doubt have a fair proportion of second homes, if and when people can afford to buy new homes. Ballater has many second homes already which do not necessarily contribute anything to village life, as they are empty a lot of the time. Many people who use holiday homes shop before coming to Ballater and so do not contribute much to the economy of the village.

I agree with paragraph 10.5.2. I feel your proposals are in opposition to this. People may very well not want to live in Ballater if it were spoilt by large new housing developments.

The character and economy of the village may very well be lost.

Ref 82 Name A M Walker

Response

I thought I would give you some feedback on the Boat of Garten presentation on the Park Plan Outcome and the local Development Plan. It is the first time we have attended a meeting like this.

Of the 12 preferred outcomes only 3 were discussed. That has to be unsatisfactory.

The lucky 3 were shrouded in woolly language that was impenetrable to most people in the room. One has to wonder if the thinking was equally woolly.

I have since learnt that it might be "Town planning" speak. If so surely it is simply bad manners to use it on an audience of laymen and women.

Whatsmore I really believe that everyone including the park would have got much more out of the evening had it been presented in straightforward language. I found the wooliness robbed the evening of any grip or decisiveness; any sense of helping to decide a particular course of action. As a result we were all battling against the Park rather than working with it and the presenter became a bit defensive.

How did you arrive at the proposed outcomes?

Were they as a result of a SWOT or other analysis that could not be shared with us?

What are your strategies for achieving the outcomes?

Can we comment on those?

What is your action plan for each outcome?

If I may be so bold as to make a suggestion it would be to pick say 15 movers and shakers from each village ,split them into 2 or 3 groups and over a winter get them to thrash out each "outcome" and how to achieve them. (3 sessions)

A flip chart would encapsulate each session therefore a scribe and a chairman would be required for each group. Perhaps they could be the same person.

If it hadn't been for Karen Derrick and the scribe on the flip chart the whole evening would have been a complete waste of time. As it was it was a missed opportunity.

Turning to the Local Development Plan

Of the 7 main issues the words .. Development" "Housing" and .. Growth" appear in 5 of them.

It is no surprise then that the .. Affordable" housing issue completely hijacked the discussion.

There is no doubt that the provision of housing is a very real issue that affects almost everything in a dynamic community. Since when was a house ever affordable? Taking on a mortgage of 3 or 4 times salary was always daunting.

Affordability comes down to the ability to finance the provision of housing.

Quite rightly Banks and Building Societies will only lend money to people who can demonstrate an ability to service and repay their mortgage.

Quite rightly Housing Associations and local councils will only rent accommodation to people

who they believe can pay the rent.

Quite rightly developers will only build houses when they are assured of making a sale.

Affordable is a dangerous term as it gives the impression that there is a Fairy godmother who can wave her wand and provide sufficient houses to house key workers and fill our schools and lets not forget our old people.

Sadly this is not the case; there is no fairy godmother except in the case of the Social Housing where the criteria are different.

There have to be other ways.

Are our key workers paid enough?

Do they prioritise housing above lifestyle?

History tells us that farmers, whisky distillers, railway operators and even the Boat Hotel in very recent times and our golf club have all provided or subsidised housing.

The list goes on

In my view it is dishonest of the Park not to meet this issue head on and tell us how it really is instead of saying there will 25-40% affordable housing which I don't believe they can guarantee far less deliver.

Perhaps there could be a number of small developments of say 15-20 houses which would be more universally acceptable instead of the big headline grabbing proposals.

There was no feeling that the real issues; the nuts and bolts of each village were being considered in any depth or how and when they would be delivered. This was a pity as we had all completed questionnaires and surveys.

All told this was a pretty negative experience.

Ref 83 Name Allan Bantick

Response

I am responding to Question 4 in the Main Issues Report. I do NOT support the preferred option 3 of question 4. I do not support option 2 of question 4.

Ref 84 Name Grantown & Vicinity Community Council

Response

General - the preferred options are generally agreed, but there are too many aspects which require considerable thought for voluntary groups to discuss. This response therefore addresses only the matters of direct relevance to our members.

Issue 1 - agree option 2 - essential to protect special qualities which drove NP designation

Issue 2 - agree option 3

Issue 3 - agree option 2 - greater support for voluntary groups is needed

Issue 4 - agree option 3 - only zone land with low wildlife/landscape value

Issue 5 - agree option 1 - ensure scale of development protects character of settlement and existing facilities can accommodate

Grantown - agree option but zone field SE of Dulicht Bridge, and former trackbed for Strathspey Railway extension and station complex

Issue 6 - agree option 3 but see response to issues 4 and 5

Issue 7 - agree option 2 - promote strathspey Railway for additional public transport

Other Issues - greater protection of cultural, built and natural heritage. Safeguard Grantown Square regarding excessive or inappropriate advertising, parking, etc.

Ref 85 Name Forestry Commission Scotland

Response

It would be useful if stronger reference could be made to the Scottish Governments woodland removal policy with regards to any proposed developments.

Ref 86 Name Aberdeenshire Council

Response

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your Main Issues Report. The Marr Area Committee considered this matter at their meeting of 13 December 2011 and would ask you to think over the following points:-

In relation to Question 1 we are concerned that the approach promoted of using the proposals map as a constraints map does not reflect that boundaries of these areas may change in the life of the plan and may result in the need for early modification, resulting in re-examination. A more flexible approach would be to use supplementary guidance (or indeed planning advice as the boundaries of many of the designations are not within the gift of the CNPA to determine) to define the policy) boundaries.

In relation to question 2 we are unconvinced that the preferred approach will address fundamental issues of resource use within the park area from residents and businesses, and suggest that greater thought is given to how the carbon footprint of the park can be reduced through planning policies and proposals. Key strategic tourism resources, including existing caravan parks, should be protected from alternative development forms.

In relation to questions 3 and 25 we are concerned that the needs of dispersed rural communities are not met by the proposals, and the significant contribution that might be made from new housing on appropriate sites within country areas to meeting both need and demand is not recognised. A centralising policy in Strathdon and Dinnet may not be appropriate.

We are concerned that the use of a standard "benchmark" for affordable housing may not address variations in demand for affordable housing which may exist across the park area.

In relation to question 8 we are concerned that focus on one development site in Ballater may not allow choice or any insurance against that site not coming forward. A second site should be identified as a potential substitute. Additional employment land allocations must be included to provide continuity of employment land provision in the settlement, and there may be scope for a "commercial Centre" designation on the open ground adjacent to both the business park and A93.

In relation to question 25 we are concerned regarding the scale of the land allocations made in Dinnet and whether these are appropriate for short term development in a community of this size.

In relation to question 26 we fail to understand how land allocation policy that promotes development across the park area can be reconciled with the promotion of development in communication "hotspots". Either the strategy focuses development of particular areas to achieve this objective, or it does not.

We commend to you the use of supplementary guidance as a means of proving policy detail in the plan, and support the rolling forward of existing policy in th is form.

Ref 87 Name Scottish Campaign for National Parks

Response

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the Main Issues Report of the Local Development Plan process. As an organisation which meets regularly with CNPA officers, we are familiar with the context of the Authority's proposals for the Cairngorms National Park. We found the recent, joint meeting of NGOs and CNPA members and staff particular helpful in

fleshing out some of the thinking that has gone into the document.

We note that there was a great deal of common purpose and agreement on most of the issues which arose in Pitlochry, but regrettably little indication of a shift to more radical thinking in regard to future housing development. Most significant to us is the fundamental disagreement over the nature and scale of housing development, where we see little to convince us that the CNPA will resolve the issues over local needs housing without severely damaging the special qualities of the National Park. We are particularly aggrieved, although we understand the political pressures, by the inclusion of An Camas Mor as a central focus for development in the NPP for the first time. We note that the Reporters to the Local Inquiry were highly critical that its justification for being in the Local Plan was altogether inadequate and much work was needed in regard to identifying the totality of housing need, village by village and in addressing major concerns over environmental issues. We see no evidence that these issues have been adequately addressed, albeit that the Authority undertook to do the work in preparation for the new LDP. The Authority remains wedded to a notion which is fatally flawed in concept and practice and the National Park will be much the poorer for it.

Background

Before responding to the set questions, we want to lay out in detail, an alternative vision for housing supply in the National Park. We do this because we feel that a new paradigm is required to enable communities to be properly housed without the concomitant gross overdevelopment which has happened in the past and is still happening today. Such development has already rendered Aviemore an urban sprawl of epic proportions (even more than it was already, before the National Park was established) and is in the process of ruining other villages, particularly in Badenoch and Strathspey. We also note from the survey work in preparation for the NPP that for local communities and visitor's one of the characteristic values of the National Park, relating to its cultural heritage, is the predominance of planned, stone built villages. A continuation of that value and that vision is not best served by the approach being taken by the CNPA in regard to housing policies, apart altogether from the environmental issues. SCNP have been informed through a combination of desk-top study and personal communication of how other national parks have dealt with local needs housing. We are currently involved in more detailed research using evidence from the Peak District National Park in England. It is salutary to find that with a similar problem of having to find means to retain a young, economically active population in the settlements of the Peak Park through provision of affordable housing, that the NPA has chosen solutions which have been eminently successful in achieving that objective over the last 20 years. Its starting point was a statement which, by comparison, does not feature in the CNPA's Main Issues Report, viz. 'Opportunities for providing housing in the National Park without damaging its environmental qualities are diminishing. The supply of land is finite, whilst the demand for housing is insatiable.' The situation pertaining in the Peak Park has similar characteristics to that of CNP- a propensity for encouraging a commuting population who want to live in the Park and travel to work in surrounding conurbations; a desire for second homes as investments or for holiday purposes; a migration of retirees to rural idylls and a housing supply which is beyond the means of indigenous young people to access the housing ladder.

The population projection, unlike CNPA, is to have a stable population to safeguard the special qualities of the National Park. We note that CNPA want now to operate on a presumption of a 20% increase in population over the period of the next 20 years without justifying this increase from the stable population projection of the first NPP, other than its being implied from the availability of housing in the future. Such thinking has all the hallmarks of a self-perpetuating cycle which will inevitably lead to further degradation of the natural and cultural heritage. To achieve its objectives the Peak Park has determined that it needs to focus its land use planning for new build housing on delivering affordable homes and to dispense with the need for

open market housing as a quid pro quo for developers. Indeed it states in SPG, Affordable Housing, that, 'cross subsidy, whereby higher priced homes can be used to subsidise the provision of affordable homes is (also) inappropriate. This is particularly so in the National Park where cross subsidy can be seen as selling off the environment to subsidise housing.' Of necessity, it operates occupancy conditions based on residency criteria or employment needs to avoid the problems of providing housing excess to requirements. The only exceptions to new, affordable housing provision are housing for longstanding residents such as retiring farmers or for employment needs or where a vernacular building can be suitably converted to domestic use. Most fundamental to the Peak Park's land use planning approach is that land allocations operate on the basis of a rural exceptions policy, (Annex B of PPG3 (March 2000) which advises that exception sites cannot be identified in local plans. It states, 'the rural exceptions policy has been considered the most appropriate way that the land use planning system can help make affordable housing available to people with a longstanding connection to the Park ... Sites which otherwise would not have been released can be given consent for local people. Such sites tend to be small scale and can be located within or on the edge of the Park's settlements.'

SPG, Affordable Housing states 'that this approach has stood the test of time being reaffirmed in PPG3 and the Rural White Paper (Autumn 2000). In fact the latter recommends greater use of this method. It is interesting to note that NPAs have the best record throughout the country for providing affordable housing through the rural exceptions policy.'

We regard the above approach as enlightened in relation to the special position of national parks. It contrasts markedly with the situation in Scotland where the recent advice from the Chief Planner of 4 November 2011 to avoid occupancy restrictions, makes no reference to national parks, but does accept that there will be a need for tighter policies where there is a danger of suburbanisation of the countryside. We will be seeking to lobby the Minister to make a special case for national parks to be excluded from the generality of this advice.

Perhaps the most salutary test of the success of the Peak Park policies is the fact that land values for affordable housing remain relatively low by comparison with those outside the Park's boundaries- by a factor of 10-20 times (£10,000 as opposed to £100,000-£200,000).

What would a paradigm shift entail? For SCNP, our stance is that the Authority needs to base its housing allocations on a critical assessment of need, village by village. There should be a presumption against large land allocations for new build housing and whilst we agree that housing development should be contained within existing settlements, the anticipated large increase in provision in Badenoch and Strathspey does not reflect national park values. Indeed it is contrary to those values and risks bringing the Park Authority into disrepute. To safeguard the national park brand, the NPA needs to reverse its oversupply of housing land and follow the example of the Peak Park and limit housing development to that required for a stable population.

Turning to the list of issues:-

Issue 1 How can we protect the special qualities of the Park and provide clarity on where development should and should not go?

Option 1 is inappropriate. Option 2 will not of itself deliver NP values. Whilst we agree that policies need to be clear and that there should be as much advice as possible, there needs to be a principled approach to development. Does it serve NP purposes? Is the scale appropriate? Does it meet the desired cultural heritage values? Is it distinctive enough to mark it out as being in tune with local vernacular styles.

Issue 2 How do we plan for the sustainable use of the existing resources and respond to the effects of climate change such as water, energy, waste, carbon. Whilst accepting Option 3 as the preferred option, the text acknowledges that the present consumption regime within the Park's communities is unsustainable. Proposals for the current rate of house building, given the inherited allocations from the first local Plan, with its dependency on large travel to work

distances for those commuting to Inverness or further afield, flies in the face of the preferred option. The NPA needs to offer leadership in sustainable development, but its position over the housing issue lacks credibility and invites ridicule.

Issue 3. How and where can we make sure communities have what they need - jobs, tourism options, facilities etc?

Clearly, Option 2 which allows different communities to differentiate themselves by growing at their own pace of economic development is closer to NP values of organic growth, but it sits uneasily with the NPA determined, large housing allocations which will completely swamp, in some cases, the nature and feel of some local communities. It will also be a sensitive balancing act to ensure that there is equal accessibility to the various levers for sustainable development. An Camas Mor cannot seriously be described as a sustainable community unless every householder works within the community or in nearby employment. As far as we are aware, there is no mechanism for determining that An Camas Mor will not follow the recurrent pattern of large scale second home ownership or as a commuter dormitory for Inverness.

Issue 4. How and where can we meet the housing need in our communities- open market, affordable, local needs?

Picking up on the Peak Park's solution, we believe the vast majority of new housing should address the need for affordable homes.

Issue 5. How and where should development happen in the National Park?

Paragraph 9.12 states that, 'in the light of the existing planning consents, we believe that there are no reasonable alternatives to the current approach.' There lies the difficulty the CNPA has in consulting with environmental NGOs. Our position follows that of the Reporters to the local Inquiry who observed that the CNPA had an opportunity with the existing local Plan to start afresh and create new paradigms for land use planning and not follow the pattern set by constituent planning authorities. It chose not to do so and finds itself in a bind. It admits that the inherited housing allocations have created a problem, for instance in Aviemore, which will require to be remedied by a process of 'greening'. Such a situation may be seen as 'realistic' by the CNPA but it is far from the principled approach that a national park authority should be adopting in relation to sustainable development. We agree that there has to be a settlement hierarchy and that virtually all development should be contained within existing village envelopes, but the current modus operandi of the CNPA is a populist approach to land use planning- find the line of least resistance, take the environment as a flexible friend which can be adapted to suit immediate needs, irrespective of long term damage, and carry on until the same issues re-occur further down the line. We

anticipate future relaxations in the settlement boundaries to address the same issues as currently occupy the Authority. Such a prospectus was and is almost wholly avoidable.

We have already stated that An Camas Mor is a fatally flawed concept which rides roughshod over designated sites and will not achieve the objectives of a sustainable community as defined by the adopted principles. It also highlights a logical inconsistency in the NPA's approach to development patterns since An Camas Mor is seen on the one hand as absorbing main development pressures in Badenoch and Strathspey, while on the other, there is acceptance of the need to provide housing where it is required in individual villages. Other than that we do not intend to comment further on the detail of Issue 5 relating to individual settlements.

Issue 6. How do we plan for development that supports our rural areas- follow the existing patterns of development or take a different approach?

Option 3, the preferred approach, is really the same as Option 1, the ad hoc approach because

it is based on flexibility. What is required is a set of presumptions to guide development to where it can do least damage to national park values. Option 3 is effectively a relaxation of the current local Plan which steered development to existing settlements. SCNP prefers the Option 2 approach of focussing development within the settlement envelopes and developing a set of presumptions to allow for meritorious development in exceptional cases.

Issue 7. How can we help people move around the Park -local access, tourists, people travelling through the Park?

The most significant development on the horizon is the proposed dualling of the A9. As a National Park Authority, this should be a main issue in terms of respecting national park values. Means will have to be found to maintain connectivity for wildlife and appropriate access and crossing points for local communities and visitors. Option 2, the preferred approach, obviously has the advantage of being an informed approach but the reference to planning gain from developments, on the past and current performance of the NPA simply suggests to SCNP that the National Park environment will take the hit.

Other Issues SCNP is sorely disappointed in this Main Issues Report. We accept that there are fine words

about an ecosystems approach and the need to pay heed to national park values but the direction of travel in respect of land use planning is more of the same failed policies from the past. There are those now, nationally and internationally, who are beginning to question whether the land use planning and management policies of the CNPA are compatible with the NP designation. We share those concerns.

Ref 88 Name Donald and Rita Isles

Response

We generally support the response of Blair Atholl & Struan Community Council to the consultation. However, we wish to make an individual response on Question 12.

Question 12

We disagree with the proposal to include the site to the south-east of the village to provide opportunities for housing. To develop housing in this field would fundamentally alter the entrance to the village from the south. This is given added importance as Blair Atholl is the first community signposted after the southern entrance to the Cairngorms National Park on the A9, and will be the first impression many visitors have of the Park. We also have concerns about the suitability of the field for housing. The access to the site is unsuitable for any significant increase in traffic as the approach roads are both narrow with no pavements and blind entrances. There is little scope for widening either road to modern standards. Although the part of the field identified is outwith SEPA's 200 year flood zone, it does not drain well. It is also close to the local sewage works.

We recognise that the sites shown in the current Local Plan are unsuitable for housing because of the flood risk. However, we would suggest that, before ruling them out altogether, an assessment is made of the likely cost and effects of flood protection measures so that one or both of these sites could become suitable for development.

As an alternative to the site proposed and the current sites, we would suggest that Site 019c stretching down the Glen Tilt Road from Old Bridge of Tilt to Bridge of Tilt should be considered. This site would appear to be better drained and is just as close to most village facilities as the site to the south-east. It would require a pavement and perhaps widening of the Glen Tilt road,

but there appears to be adequate land available for this.

The Main Issues Report shows no requirement for housing land in Blair Atholl beyond that required for the 14 affordable homes identified on Perth & Kinross Council's current waiting list. We believe that there is a requirement to identify suitable land in the village for further development over time, both for open market housing and for further affordable housing in the future. Any such development would result in extension of the existing village boundaries and would need to be fully discussed with the local community before any decision is made.

We agree with the proposal to use the land identified in the current Local Plan to provide opportunities for economic growth.

Ref 89 Name Laura Cannicott

Response

Issue No.4

(Particularly in respect of the housing proposals in Boat-of-Garten, but also concerning all other small residential communities in the CNP)

We support the proposal of small housing developments (approx 4-5 units) within the community (and likewise with other communities within the CNP), for locals living and working in the Park area, thereby providing employment to local tradespeople. We do not support larger developments, such as An Camus Mor, as these developments are generally built by larger companies from outwith the area; and these homes attract holiday home and second-home owners; these developments are not in-keeping with the natural surroundings and diminish the sense of wildness to the visitor.

We are very disturbed that the CNP A is supporting the large housing development at An Camus Mor, as we believe this goes against the Park's main aim and purpose i.e. "To ensure the CNP is a special place where the natural and cultural heritage is conserved and enhanced". We believe the whole character of the Strath will be changed for the worse, the sense of wilderness will be destroyed, and the presence of a large residential development such as An Camus Mor will undoubtedly be detrimental to the special wildlife living within and around the area. It is widely accepted that this area is unique not only in the UK but further afield, and is known and loved by many British and foreign visitors, who play a major part in sustaining the local economy through tourism.

Finally, we urge the CNPA to introduce Residency Laws to all new housing proposals within its boundaries to prevent further worsening of the affordable housing shortage for locals.

Ref 90 Name Victor Jordan

Response

Question 3 on page 32

1. I think Option 2 is better than Option 1 because Option 2 seems to have more regard to the differing circumstances of each community. However, it is not clear to me how the expression of policy in Option 2 will affect the functions of the National Park Authority in allocating or reserving sites for economic development and the functions of the planning authority generally and in exercising control of development.

2. I believe that the emphasis should be on (a) seeking projects of economic development clearly compatible with the first national park aim, (b) recognising the value of small enterprises, self employment

etc. and (c) encouraging existing industries such as farming, tourism, outdoor and rural pursuits. The figures at paragraph 8.5 on page 34 are of doubtful validity

3. Paragraph 8.5 states that approximately 575 affordable units have consent or are "pending a permission being issued." These presumably are overwhelmingly permissions granted for open market housing subject to planning conditions requiring that a percentage of the development be affordable housing and are on sites allocated in the adopted local plan and at An Camas Mor. The 1,500 houses at An Camas Mor comprised in the planning permission described at paragraph 10.3.4 must on this basis be assumed to be the source of the majority of the 575 affordable houses referred to. This follows from the fact that the adopted local plan expects that with the aid of the 834 sites allocated in the local plan 1010 homes will be built from 2006 to 2016. On the optimistic assumption that of these 1010 homes 25% will actually prove to be affordable the adopted local plan will yield about 253 affordable homes.

4. The affordable homes at An Camas Mor are not likely to be in the right position to meet the needs of people in settlements other than Aviemore. The fact that the affordable homes are not distributed appropriately is demonstrated, for example, by the fact that Ballater H1 a site on which 90 dwellings are allocated to be built by 2016 with capacity for a further 160 thereafter does not have planning permission. The above facts show the folly of approaching housing need and supply on the basis of overall figures for the whole National Park especially as the inhabited part of the Park is split by the Cairngorms massif producing two parts that are very different economically and geographically and divided by a common massif.

5. A local approach is needed within the framework of a long term sustainable settlement strategy for the particular settlement or sector which is determined by what is of benefit to the settlement and compatible with the vision for the Park.

6. Another weakness of these figures is that, they do not take into account the fact that, as explained in paragraph 8 below social landlords are unlikely to have the funds to exploit the planning conditions to the full extent of the percentage specified in the planning conditions if at all.

Question 4 on page 37

7. I do not agree with the preferred option, Option 3, since it relies primarily on the provision of open market housing subject to planning conditions requiring a specified percentage of the development to be affordable. This policy suffers from a number of disadvantages including the following.

8. First, there is no guarantee that the specified percentage will be provided, especially the main need of affordable housing to rent, since social landlords need funds to exploit such conditions. It is stated in paragraph 19 of Planning Advice Note 2/2010, Affordable Housing and Housing Land Audits, "the contribution from the developer of a market housing site will normally be the provision of serviced land e.g. a proportion of the site which can be developed by or for a RSL or the local authority ... it should be transferred at less than the value for mainstream housing for sale." In other words if the housing association or housing authority cannot afford to pay the discounted value of the land and the cost of building the affordable homes the developer's obligation will need to be commuted perhaps, if the housing associations and the housing authority have no funds at all for the site, commuted to a cash sum. The developer may also be able to persuade the planning authority that, to make the development financially viable, the percentage to be required by the condition on the planning permission should be smaller than that specified in the development plan or even a cash sum. An example is the conversion of the

former Monaltrie Hotel at Ballater into 30 or so flats where no affordable homes were required (or built) but just a cash contribution.

9. A second disadvantage flowing from the financial mechanism described above is that open market sites are liable to be developed when convenient to the developer but at a time when the social landlords have insufficient funds available for the site.

10. A third disadvantage is that reliance on such planning conditions in rural areas is not sustainable in terms of resources of land where, as in the Cairngorms National Park, the need for affordable housing is much greater than the need for open market housing. The adopted local plan contains no housing requirement for open market housing but did include the results of the largely desk based research carried out by Heriot Watt which showed that over the period 2006 to 2016 there would over the Park as a whole be a need for at least 99 new affordable dwellings each year (which means a total of 990.) There is no need for new open market housing in Ballater. Deaths of those living here and normal movements ensure that a steady trickle comes on to the open market sufficient to meet the need of those local people able to afford to buy housing on the open market.

11. The figures in Table 22 on page 38 of Main Issues Report -Background Evidence 1. Housing and Population appear, at first glance, to contradict my assertion in paragraph 10 above that the need for affordable housing in the National Park is greater than the need for open market housing. Table 22 shows that the housing requirement for the part of Aberdeenshire in the National Park from 2010 to 2029 is 230 of which 94 are said to be affordable. However Table 22, though showing 94 affordable for the period 2010 to 2014 shows no affordable dwellings required for 2015 to 2029 although the final bullet point on page 36 recognises that further need for affordable dwellings will inevitably be identified in this period. More importantly paragraphs 9.4 and 9.5 show that to calculate the housing land requirement the research has used the projections of population, waiting lists and completion rates. As already pointed out the authors of the research recognise that the waiting lists are not able to indicate need for affordable housing in 2015 to 2029. The estimates of future population do not, it appears, indicate what proportion of the population will need affordable housing. The last bullet point on page 36 indicates that the information as to completions has been used to calculate demand for open market housing so as to sustain such a level of provision in the future. In other words the housing requirement for open market housing is based not on the need of the communities of the National Park but on demand. This is especially so for Badenoch and Strathspey as paragraphs 6.16 to 6.18 show that the assessments of housing need there are based on the commitment of Highland Council to high growth including continuing migration into the area. Yet there is no evidence that this is sustainable in terms of resources of land and achievement of the first National Park Aim nor is there any evidence that the only way economic development can take place in each sector of the Park is by encouraging inward migration.

12. I think that in general Option 2 should be followed by allocating, reserving and protecting sites specifically for wholly or mainly affordable housing according to local need. This would mean that land would not be developed unless and until a social landlord or other body had the funds to buy the land for affordable housing and subsequently build the houses.

13. It has been said that if the landowner is not willing affordable housing will not be produced by this method. However the planning system works on the "voluntary compulsory" principle. If the landowner can only develop land for affordable housing this is an inducement to the landowner to develop the land for affordable housing. This element of compulsion is recognised in government policy, for example, in paragraph 80 of the Scottish Planning Policy of February

2010 which begins "Planning authorities should promote the efficient use of land and buildings , directing development towards sites within existing settlements where possible to make effective use of existing infrastructure and service capacity and to reduce energy consumption." Paragraph 70 also contains some very relevant guidance in this respect.

14. One way of applying the necessary inducement is for sites with potential for housing in an area to be protected or reserved in the development plan for wholly or mainly affordable housing even though the owner does not currently wish to develop the land for that purpose. Thus in the adopted local plan sites are protected for economic development, environmental purposes or other purposes. For example page 90 of the adopted local plan states that the bus station at Ballater will remain as a site for business use or another use appropriate for a town centre should it be vacated by its current occupier. The current Main Issues Report on page 80 talks of protecting a site at Killiecrankie for purposes of the railway. There seems to be no reason why the same should not be done for housing where there is a pressing need for such a policy. Under paragraphs 59 of Planning Advice Note 2/2010: Affordable Housing and Housing Land Audits non-effective or constrained sites can be included in the Housing Audit. Paragraph 55 indicates that a site will be constrained if it is not "in the ownership or control of a party which can be expected to develop it or to release it for development". As we are in a period of stark decline or slump both in the housing market and in public spending it seems eminently appropriate to protect suitable sites for affordable housing in the expectation that at some stage the economic situation will improve.

15. Another side of the same coin is a blanket ban on development in an area except for certain uses such as affordable housing known often as an exceptions policy. Examples are contained in Main Issues Report -Background Evidence 1. Housing and Population at pages 269,272/3,281,283,287,290,294,297, and 304. These are all in England and Wales. However it can be seen from page 256 that policies are being introduced in the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park which are similar to the Exception Site policies existing in many of the English and Welsh National Parks.

16. A measure which could enable finance to be raised to provide affordable housing would be the creation of a trust in each local community to acquire land or buildings in order to provide affordable housing which the trust would own or manage in the interests of the community.

Spatial Strategy on pages 39 to 45.

17. I suggest that there are two respects in which the Main Issues Report does not comply with section 17(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as inserted by section 2 of the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006.

18. First, it seems to me that, in breach of subsection (a) of section 17(2), the Main Issues Report fails to set out general proposals for development in the National Park and in particular proposals as regards where development should be carried out (and where it should not) although there is a possible exception so far as An Camus Mor is concerned in the remarks at paragraph 9.1 0 on page 41.

19. The Spatial Strategy set out on pages 39 and 40 of the Main Issues Report is, to quote from the first item on page 40, "a settlement strategy that reinforces the existing pattern of settlement by supporting greater growth in the main settlements and supports growth to meet community needs in other settlements." This is basically the government policy now in paragraph 95 of the Scottish Planning Policy of February 2010. In order to convert it into general proposals for a

particular area like the Cairngorms National Park or one of its sectors there obviously needs to be more information, for example as to the quantity and type of development in the different main sectors of the National Park. Proposals for a great number of individual sites in the settlements are set out on pages 47 to 87 but there are no general proposals by which to judge the appropriateness of the array of individual sites.

20. Secondly, the Main Issues Report, in paragraph 9.12 on page 42, in effect refuses to comply with the requirement in section 17(2)(b) that the main Issues Report set out general proposals which constitute a reasonable alternative to the proposals of the authority for development in their district. The justification given by the National Park Authority at paragraph 9.12 for their stance is "In light of the existing planning consents [referred to at paragraph 9.6) we believe that there are no reasonable alternatives to the current approach."

21. My first comment on the above excuse is that its statistical basis seems confined to housing. More importantly, the excuse overlooks the fact that a large number of the particular sites proposed in pages 42 to 87 do not have planning permission, most notably Ballater HI which the currently operative local plan says has a capacity for 250 dwellings plus mixed uses. It appears from page 54 of the Main Issues Report that no permission has been granted for 50 houses at Grantown-on-Spey HI in the operative local plan, from page 58 that planning permission has been granted for only 80 of the 220 dwellings on Newtonmore HI and H2, from page 62 that no planning permission has been granted for the site for proposed short term housing at Blair Atholl, from page 64 that no planning permission has been granted for the sites proposed at Boat of Garten for short and medium term development and, from page 66, that no planning permission has been granted for one site at Braemar proposed in paragraph 11.6.6 to complement provision for short term demand and one large site to meet long term demand. There are other examples on page 72 (Cromdale paragraph 11.9.5), page 74 (Dalwhinnie paragraphs 11.10.2 and 11.10.3), page 76 (Dinnet paragraph 11.11.3), page 78 (Dulnain Bridge paragraph 11.12 .. 3), page 80 (Killiecrankie paragraph 11.13 .2), page 82 (Kincaig) and page 86 (Tomintoul paragraph 11.16.6).

Question 5 on page 44

22. No. I do not agree with the preferred option. As paragraph 9.12 of the Main Issues Report makes clear the preferred option is to stick with the present policy. As I have shown in paragraph 11 above in my comments on affordable housing the present policy is based on allowing large numbers of open market houses to be built that are not needed by the communities of the Park. Thinking and projections seem to be based on the idea that migration should continue at the same rate as before using the demand for houses in the National Park for retirement, second homes or in a minority of cases for commuting up to 40 miles or so to work. The existing policy is not sustainable as to resources of land in the long term if not the medium term and is liable to make it impossible to achieve the first National Park aim.

23. As I have indicated in paragraphs 8 and 9 above the current policy, even in terms purely of financing affordable housing, is less advantageous overall than social landlords developing sites allocated wholly or mainly for affordable housing at a time when the social landlord has the funds to do so. As I have shown above in paragraph 21 the Main Issues Report proposes a substantial amount of housing for which no planning permission has been granted so it would not be pointless to devise a new policy which should recognise that each sector or even each settlement needs to have a long term sustainable settlement strategy for the purposes of which resources of land, water and infrastructure need to be assessed and planned and the local economy and other indicators energetically assessed. I find it difficult to envisage any

circumstances where it would be advantageous to the National Park and compatible with the first National Park aim to have a large amount of housing not needed by the local community. There needs to be a strong and exceptional case to be made for such a policy in any particular place and it has not been made.

Question 8 on page 53.

24. No. I do not agree with the preferred option .. Ballater H 1 should be abandoned. It would provide a large quantity of open market housing not needed by local people , would be a ghetto badly connected to the existing village, would in its entirety be contrary to the principles recommended in the Cairngorms Landscape Character Assessment of 1996 done for Scottish Natural Heritage, is in some respects contrary to the recommendations of the Landscape Capacity Study Final Report of August 2005 done for the National Park Authority, would degrade the setting of Monaltrie Park , the village and the strath, render Ballater less attractive and would be liable to damage the flood storage capacity of the flood plain of which it forms an integral part.

25. The option that I would put forward is that the development plan should be used to concentrate on providing housing to meet the needs of the community and in accordance with a long term sustainable settlement strategy for Ballater and its surrounding area. The main need is affordable housing for rent. To enable this to be provided (i) all land in the village or close to the village capable of providing small scale sites should be protected or allocated in the development plan for wholly or mainly affordable housing in one or more of the ways I have described in paragraphs 12 to 15 above, (ii) social landlords should be encouraged to buy existing buildings in the village to provide affordable housing and (iii) a local trust should be formed to acquire, own and manage land and buildings so as to provide affordable housing untrammelled by the rules on allocation that apply to registered social landlords. I believe that if H 1 were abandoned, as the majority of local electors requested in a petition put before the Reporters into what is now the adopted local plan, there would be sufficient local support for such a trust that money could be raised to enable such a trust to provide some affordable housing.

26. I attach a list of sites that I believe should at least be protected for affordable housing.

POSSIBLE SITES AT BALLATER FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING (IN PERPETUITY)

A. The Old School. Abergeldie Road

1. The Prince's Foundation on page 42 of "A Design Workshop for Ballater" (14th December 2009) indicate that seven to eleven new affordable dwellings could be built in the grounds of the Old School. If the school building itself were converted into market housing it is possible that even more affordable housing could be built in the grounds as less parking space would apparently be needed for a wholly residential site.

2. On the basis that Aberdeenshire Council have offered to transfer ownership to the North East Scotland Preservation Trust, the Council's Marr Area Committee at their meeting on 25th January 2011 awarded the Trust £2,774 towards the £12,500 cost of a full options study.

3. The School Sites Act 1841 as amended may well require that consent for the future use of the site be obtained from the owner who originally conveyed the land for use as a school which is understood to be the Invercauld Estate. However the Old School is listed as a building of special architectural or historic interest and the site is shown in the current local plan as "protected for community use and the provision of uses considered necessary for the local community". The owner or former owner can therefore be expected to consent on reasonable terms.

B. Vacant land on Monaltrie Avenue between Loinmuie and Abruhan

4. This site of about 32 yards by 29 yards could accommodate two affordable dwellings.

C. Rear garden of the Masonic lodge

5. At the rear of the Masonic lodge in Queen's Road is a large lawn extending into an area of rough grass and abutting both legs of School Lane. It seems that two small dwellings could be built on the south west part of this area and still leave an adequate lawn for those occupying the caretaker's accommodation at the Masonic lodge. This presumably is the basis of the statement on page 50 of "A Design Workshop for Ballater" (Prince's Foundation 14th December 2009) that the back garden of the Masonic lodge could accommodate two cottages for affordable housing.

D. Woodland and grassland on the south side of Dundarroch Road

6. This strip of woodland and grassland is about 150 yards long by 20 yards deep. Of this land the section on which houses could be built with least effect on the environment seems to be the stretch at the west end measuring about 30 yards by 20 yards and facing across the Old Line to the rear wall of the garden of the Deeside Hotel. It would therefore seem reasonable that this section, which is bounded on the west by the curtilage of a fairly recently built house, and could accommodate two affordable dwellings, be discharged by the statutory procedure from the title conditions which apparently are claimed to prohibit building on this whole strip or that any restrictions be removed by negotiation.

E. Vacant land south west of the junction of Craigview Place and Craigview Road

7. The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan Consultative Draft of October 2005 stated on page 114 that this site is suitable for 5 dwellings. On the basis of the Flood Risk Assessment commissioned by Scotia Homes Ltd for Ballater HI in the adopted plan, it may now be said that the area at Craigview is subject to a medium to high risk of flooding. However the site is within a built up area. Even if a flood risk assessment commissioned specifically for this site were to find that the site is subject to a medium to high risk of flooding, the Scottish Planning Policy of February 2010 states on page 42 that, within built up areas, areas subject to medium to high risk may be suitable for residential development if there will be flood prevention measures to the appropriate standard.

F. Vacant land north-east of the junction of Pannanich Road and Craigview Road and abutting the A93

8. The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan Consultative Draft of October 2005 stated on page 113 that this site is suitable for around 10 dwellings. This site appears to be just within the area of medium to high risk of flooding shown on S.E.P.A's indicative map (as of course is most of Ballater HI in the adopted plan). However the site is in a built up area and therefore would be subject to the same provisions of the Scottish Planning Policy of February 2010 referred to above in relation to the site south-west of the junction of Craigview Place and Craigview Road.

G. Land at Old Station Place north-east of the sweet factory

9. Excluding the line of trees on the south-east bank, this strip of land contains at its south-western end an area measuring about 30 yards by 20 yards which could perhaps accommodate two more affordable houses of the type in Old Station Place. The north western edge of this land is formed by the old paved edge of the former railway station which is listed as a building of special architectural or historic interest.

H. Land at Sluievannachie

10. The extensive grounds of this house could accommodate several affordable homes on the south and south-western part of the shelf of land that is above the flood plain. As Sluievannachie

is listed as a building of special architectural or historic interest care would be needed to satisfy environmental concerns.

I. Land between Dee Street and the Fire Station

11. This site is on the south west side of Dee Street adjoining a large portion of the stretch of Dee Street that extends from Deebank Road to the River Dee. The site is bounded on the south west by the Fire Station. The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan Consultative Draft of October 2005 on page 114 said that this site "could be suitable for 6" dwellings. Like most of Ballater HI in the adopted local plan it is in the area of medium to high flood risk shown on SEPA's indicative map. However it is in a built up area and what is said in this regard in the description of Site E (Land south west of the junction of Craigview Place and Craigview Road) also applies to this site.

J. Shop and land at the north side of the bridge over the old railway. Braemar Road.

12. There is the prospect that this area will need to be redeveloped to ensure that Braemar Road is properly supported at this point. There would be sufficient land for two affordable dwellings.

K. Site at Provost Craig Road occupied by the Royal British Legion and the Ballater and District Pipe Band.

13. The two one-storey buildings on this site have been there for more than fifty years and there is a possibility that when the site is redeveloped in the medium term the present activities in them could be transferred to new facilities within the present wooded grounds of the nearby school. Page 48 of "A Design Workshop for Ballater" (Prince's Foundation 14th December 2009) refers to this possibility and says that the site would provide land for three affordable terraced houses.

Ref 91 Name John Porter

Response

In response to the Parks draft plan I have no comment to make but would draw your notice to the lack of public transport inter-connecting the three major areas of SPEYSIDE, DEESIDE and TAYSIDE across the CAIRNGORMS. This, to me, is a lack of opportunity lost to the parks' aims. Not only to serve the isolated communities en route but to encourage and support the use of healthy sustainable outdoor activity, to serve the drop-off/pick-up points of connecting hiking/cycling routes. Also for an attractive sightseeing trip for tourists, or a 'Grand Day Out' for locals, thus served with a regular and reliable public transport.

HEATHER HOPPER

In my view this long-lost service should be re-instated. At the time it was never well promoted, and somehow lacked commitment, with a result it deteriorated into a complicated unreliable service that would-be users mistrusted (I know, I tried it), and on occasions travellers were left stranded. So, inevitable, the schedule was discontinued.

I, therefore suggest that the C.N.P.A. should review this with the intentions to re-instate and upgrading of the service to regain its credibility.

Two options to this, I see as being viable:

- (1) For the service to be franchised to an existing bus company;
- (2) A better and more committing option is for the Park Authority to maintain the service with adapted vehicles capable of carrying bicycles, wheelchairs, rucksacks, accompanied dogs in the forward interior area of the bus.

It would be for the service to be routed on a strict timetabling and connecting regime between

Pitlochry, GlenShee, Braemar (perhaps Linn of Dee) , Crathie, Ballater, Donside, Lecht, Tomintoul, Grantown. This would require a number of vehicles at a considerable capital expenditure, but the infrastructure and points of interest are in place, and the landscape value and views are free!

It would, of course, require high start-off publicity and on-going promotion to secure awareness of the service. I hope these proposals are taken seriously, and that an up-graded service suggested would be re-installed for the start of the next phase of the Parks Management Plan.

Ref 92 Name Jane Angus

Response

Ballater Local Development Plan:

It is more than depressing to look at the map of proposals about planning for houses in Ballater. There were two events run as 'Enquiry by Design' and in discussion of the area HI, whether or not one agreed with the thrust towards a large scale or small development of this area, it had to be on a 'planned village' basis. Now there is a brown band called 'housing' . Residents agree there is a complete antipathy to another isolated chunk of plumped-down residential isolation. This area must be marked as the car -and-bus-park, including that for Monaltrie Park and the Games, commercial, retail, perhaps with flats above, possibly an hotel and provision made for at least one block of well-insulated flats . Provision has to be made for off-street parking in the mixed-size houses and workshops grid and enough width in pedestrian alleys for early and later snow-clearance: small shrub/tree planting: all the grey-water/solar-heating/thermal pumps etc of new requirements: percolating rain-fall through roadsurfaces: and space for allotments. These possibly in the area most susceptible to rising water-levels.

This does require some form of master plan and the concept should not be allowed to wither in the present austere conditions. Or are the planners just being provocative? In which case I rise like the proverbial fish at the Falls of Muick. I hope to better effect

Ref 93 Name Ballater Royal Deeside Ltd

Response

Issue 4 - Affordable Housing

BRD(Ltd) do not agree with the preferred option and consider that Option 2 should be adopted. The other two options, we believe, would result in a large volume of open market housing which is neither needed nor wanted. In our experience in Ballater, many of these houses become second homes which do very little to contribute to the economy of the area. Sites should be identified for provision of affordable houses only.

Issue 3 - support for communities

We agree with preferred option 2.

10.5 Ballater Question 8

We do not agree with the preferred option. We do not believe that further open market housing is required. The land to the NE of Ballater should be used for recreation, leisure and environmental facilities plus some affordable housing.

Ref 94 Name Mrs Harvey

Response

Impressions of a relative new-comer. Special Qualities - lovely village atmosphere with exceptional shopping facilities not generally available in other villages. Resources - shopping (as above). Many organisations catering for almost every interest but lacking those for young people esp playing fields, youth organisations. There is a primary school - could it not get children interested in a football team which could carry on as they grown older. There is a lack of people to help with house maintenance. What about training schemes for school leavers to give skills in this deficiency. Housing - there are many houses on the market with few buyers. Could some suitable ones be bought and adopted for first time buyers? We certainly do not need 250 more (almost 1000 more people). Where would they come from. Looking around its an ageing village, people move here to in retirement, then grow older, and need to downsize. Could part of the scheme be a block of (say) McCarthy and Stone type flats so popular in other places including a warden on hand at night.

Ref 95 Name Susan Matthews

Response

Question 4, page 37 - I vote for option 2 but first to exhaust all options for building on existing built land, before extending settlement boundaries .. I ask that CNPA help communities to set up housing trusts to seek the finance needed for such and "seed fund" this. Proviso should be built in to ensure local builders and traders benefit and the work does not go to the larger out of area trades.

Question 6 - I do not agree with the preferred option. There is no credible data to show that a new development is needed. However I would support development of a master plan that clearly shows what this development would look like and how in detail it supports the outcomes in the Park Plan- not with vague and general statements. I do not want to see a development of second homes, holiday lets. If this is allowed it will demonstrate the CN PA has no capability to preserve the Cairngorm National Park for future generations.

Question 8 - I do not agree the land identified should be used for development and "economic growth" (what ever that means). First attention should be given to using "infill sites" in the existing settlement for affordable housing for local people. There are currently no publicised business needs that demand a new development. New developments should not be built for open market housing which history shows are mainly second homes.

I would support development of a masterplan with detail and community input that clearly shows what can be done and how this would support the outcomes in the Park Plan.

Ref 96 Name Strathspey Railway Company & Trust

Response

Background

SRCT maintains continual dialogue with CNPA about the implications and progress of its extension to Grantown proposals which seem essential to the sustainable viability of the railway, beneficial economic impact on Grantown, and tourist related development in complementing and connecting several major attractions in the Cairngorms. The extension from Broomhill to Grantown will change the nature of the tourist experience by connecting two very different small towns where passengers may wander, sightsee and shop thereby increasing local expenditures. The more intensive timetable now achievable as three steam locomotives are now available to SRC for the first time make this desirable

economic outcome deliverable.

Defining and protecting the line of the former railway and adjacent areas would be a useful contribution to development in the local plan as it now seems likely that the extension cannot be realised before 2017 when finance through Transport Scotland may be identified for the A95 road improvement scheme at Gaich the design for which includes the box tunnel required for the railway to cross that major route again. SRC has negotiated with Transport Scotland so that the Roads and TAWS (Transport and Works Scotland Act)

Orders will be co-joined.

During 2011, SRC has restructured and committed to growth and more commercial management, while SRCT has drafted its TAWS Order (which will include planning permission as already agreed with HC and CNPA) which is required to empower construction of the extension and completed an Options Appraisal of potential station sites. This latter concluded that on balance the former West Station site should be preferred on cost, feasibility, viability, deliverability and heritage criteria although the site near the caravan park might generate more economic impact for Grantown.

The former West Station site had been protected in previous local plans, and even slight encroachment from the industrial estate will not constrain that intended use.

The location of the railway including the extension is fixed as it replaces the former Highland Line exactly. Although a transport operator, the main purpose and benefits lie with tourism development. Accordingly SRC does not suggest any alternative development models or sites in response to the questions posed.

Responses by Issues and Questions

Under Issue 5 Spatial Strategies the railway and its extension should contribute to tourist and economic development in Grantown, Aviemore and Boat of Garten directly, as well as Nethy Bridge and Tomintoul indirectly through increased access and use by additional visitors if planned SRC marketing through CAG and CBP proves effective. Protecting the line of the former railway will help secure these outcomes.

SRC is supportive of the preferred option under Issue 1 Special Qualities/Question 1. The railway offers passengers sights of almost all the Special Landscape Qualities identified in Table 1 and is one way they can be accessed by the less able and very young. One element of SRC's refreshed marketing strategy mainly implemented through CAG and CBP is to make more use of non-railway features in website and hard copy promotional activity to enhance visitor experiences and interest, with associated crossselling and joint ticketing with other major attractions and accommodation providers.

The SRC considers that it can make some contribution under Issue 3 Supporting Communities because it sees itself as one element of any "framework to encourage appropriate growth and investment to meet the needs of both the business sector and local communities". The business plan for growth and the extension required by Scottish Government to support approval of the already drafted TAWS (Transport and Works Scotland Act) Order must demonstrate both financial viability and significant economic benefits; direct, indirect and induced employment should arise from growth and the extension generating more "opportunities to provide and secure long-term employment options" the suggested priority in para 7.4. In that role at least replacing a former railway is not "speculative investment in the provision of facilities for the business sector" para 7.5.

Clearly the railway and its extension make contributions to Issue 7 Connectivity, and in the longer term these could extend beyond tourism experiences. The extended railway operating a more intensive timetable should attract some commuting traffic, but the 2005 HIE demand study

identified little scope for this because so much employment in the park is dependent upon part-time and flexible jobs in tourist related sectors. The railway seems likely to help reduce road traffic along the main communication axis of CNP.

More importantly, linking the railway effectively with the core paths network is critical to maximising its economic impact in two distinct ways:

- First to ensure that a significant number of passengers can walk into Grantown from the West Station site along reasonably attractive routes to maximise the economic regeneration benefits to Grantown.
- Second, to provide opportunities for increased recreational access from all railway stations probably driving an increase in single ticketing by the railway to meet the needs of other facilities providers as expressed in market research with adventure tour operators.

SRC has no relevant perspective or remit to comment on Issues 2, 4, and 6.

Under Other Issues (Question 27) Tourism Development is identified but seems to be under-developed in policy proposals unless it is considered fundamental to the overall aims of CNPA.

Other related under-represented policy Issues that appear fundamental to the aims of CNPA and any local plan and which might affect SRC and the development of its extension include;

- The scope for economic diversification given the area's high dependence on tourism
- Enhancing the skills base (SRCT's proposal for an engineering Centre of Excellence based on existing workshop skills/facilities may make some contribution)
- Specific proposals for the low carbon economy
- An overdependence on already allocated near railway sites for economic developments in Aviemore, Boat of Garten and Grantown (especially given the bad neighbour aspects of steam railway operations for many modern activities, suggests that some empirical research into the needs of C21 business investments and the probabilities of attracting such to CNP is essential, whatever the risk of short term over-provision of economic development land, para 7.5). The CNPAIHIE joint review of the supply of and demand for development land for commercial and industrial use within the National Park presumably reinforced a cautious approach, as the research found limited demand but a need to have cost-effective, viable development land, certainly in the larger settlements. Railway sites are not necessarily viable for modern commercial activities.
- The significance of broad band access to both visitors to the CNP but also to those considering holidays and visits.

THE NPP Strategic Objectives seem more aspirational for economic development than the detailed proposals in the Main Issues Report;

- Create conditions conducive to business growth and investment that are consistent with the special qualities of the Park and its strategic location.
- Encourage entrepreneurship, especially in young people and in sectors which complement the special qualities of the Park.
- Promote 'green business' opportunities.
- Promote opportunities for economic diversification across all areas of the Park.
- Address barriers to employment uptake.
- Raise the profile and excellence of local produce and services.
- Promote access to education and vocational training in all levels across the Park.
- Ensure a match between training provision and current/future skills needed. SRC contributes primarily to aims 2 & 4 of CNPA;
- promoting understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the national park
- promoting sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities and to all three strategic objectives, which are essential to enhancing the viability of SRC in changing

commercial and economic circumstances.

The heritage steam railway is part of the cultural heritage of the area and a major influence in the historical development of Aviemore and Grantown in particular.

Ref 97 Name Keith Miller

Response

Issue 1. I believe there should be a stronger option that gives the plants, animals, habitats, wildness, landscapes, etc, the significantly greater protection, conservation and enhancement that they deserve in the Cairngorms whereby the additional spatial guidance mentioned in option 2

(a) goes significantly beyond purely designated nature conservation sites. Plants, animals and habitats do not know whether or not they are living in or out of designated sites, and many many species and habitats should be protected, conserved and enhanced outwith designated nature conservation sites. Surely this is what the additional designation of 'National Park' is all about: and

{b) the additional spatial guidance is sufficiently clear and robust to actually conserve and enhance the wildness, habitats, plants, animals and landscapes of the Cairngorms.

Issue 4 I do not support the preferred option. 25% affordable homes is completely unacceptable. I support option 2. Also I believe that 'affordable' should actually mean affordable to families and individuals that existing and on the low incomes that are reality in rural areas.

Supplementary guidance - Supplementary guidance on natural heritage, water resources and landscape need to be sufficiently clear and robust to achieve real protection, conservation and enhancement of habitats, plants, animals, biodiversity, landscape and wildness of the Cairngorms.

An Camas Mor - this development should be abandoned or only proceed with 100% genuinely affordable housing.

Ref 98 Name Mo Richards

Response

I am responding to the Main Issues Report Question 4. I do not support the preferred option 3 of question 4. I do support option 2 of question 4.

Ref 99 Name Donny Black

Response

I confirm that this firm acts for the owner of the site, Mr Donny Black.

I enclose a location plan of the site together with the completed form providing further details about the site, and would request that the site be included in the next Local Development Plan.

1 There is a need to provide new housing sites in Nethybridge, there are no ongoing housing sites being built, and there is a known and established demand for both private and social rented housing, both of which can be provided here. There are currently 135,000 families on waiting lists for social rented housing in Scotland.

2 The two sites at the school wood have now been zoned since 2005, six years, and No building work at all has started. It would seem very unlikely that they will be developed considering the costs involved and the number of houses achievable. There is no opportunity for social rented housing here, it is not financially viable .

3 The two sites at school wood are also under mature woodland with many species of birds and insects etc. As well the natural fauna etc indigenous to the area, and were the subject of major local objection at the time of zoning by Highland Council. Local nature trails and footpaths wind their way through these woodlands and are used by locals and visitors to the National Park to enjoy the nature setting.

4 Cairngorm National Park Authority have now also refused Planning Permission for an application to develop this site.

5 A site in Boat of Garten has very recently been turned down by the National Park and the Reporter on appeal, for housing in a partially wooded area with wildlife etc in a very similar situation to the school woods at Nethybridge.

6 There was evidently a need for housing in Boat of Garten, this will now not be achieved, but the site at lettoch Road, being promoted here would provide housing close to Boat of Garten as well as meeting the demand within Nethybridge itself.

7 The site at lettoch Road is located immediately outwith the 30m ph limit, just as the two at school wood are. It would not create any issues to extend the 30mph limit slightly further along lettoch Road.

8 Visibility at the entrance to the site is not an issue as the proposed position of the entrance provides the required visibility.

9 Site topography is gently sloping and will not require much restructuring.

10 The site is currently under grass so there no issues about trees, wildlife or plants and flowers.

11 The site has natural defences and there is also the opportunity to create landscaping/tree buffer zones within the site.

12 The site is located immediately adjacent to existing housing, so that an extension of this is in accordance with the Scottish Executive wish to have new developments abut onto the existing settlement. This cannot be said of the two sites at school wood.

13 The proposal is supported by national planning policies- Outwith the settlement limits as defined by town and village envelopes, development will only be supported where it -

- a) Demonstrates a proven need for a countryside location
- b) Is justified by policy on Housing Development in the Countryside or
- c) Is for affordable or special needs housing
- d) Is compatible with surrounding uses and
- e) Can demonstrate that neutral or positive net environmental impact will occur

This site at Lettoch Road can be justified on all these policies.

14 Further, where brownfield and infill sites cannot fulfil the housing requirements it is necessary to release Greenfield land next to built up areas.

15 We fully appreciate the need locally for affordable housing, our proposed layout plans for the development includes for 12 affordable houses

16 The site has previous planning history in that the Cairngorm National Park Authority planners have already looked at this site and considered it to be a suitable residential site going forward.

17 Residential sites must be approved, young people in the Park will be forced to leave if accommodation is not provided, this site meets the criteria I trust this information will be sufficient for the site at Lettoch Road to be considered for inclusion in the Plan, but please contact me if you require any further details.

(Site plan and site information supplied)

Ref 100 Name Atholl Estate

Response

Additional Site 005a Land at Struan, nr Calvine

Following the felling of the coniferous woodland in 2007, Atholl Estates are now considering the future of the land at Struan and believe that there may be potential for small scale residential use.

The Main Issues Report is seeking to provide support for rural areas by promoting growth which matches historic growth patterns and uses the landscape character assessment to protect these areas from inappropriate development

The Landscape Assessment undertaken for the land at Struan (Site Ref OOSa) is supportive of small scale residential development noting that "one or two small clusters may work on this site with good woodland planting to define the layout and create shelter and backdrop". The suggested small clusters of development links to the established pattern of development in the Struan area, which is characterised by several small clusters of development to the north of the site at the Struan Inn Highland Hotel and to the south and south east at Clachan of Struan.

The site has been given an overall rating of Amber by the Site Analysis, with issues to address noted as access to services and facilities.

Atholl Estates welcomes the LDP's position on the land at Struan and look forward to working with the National Park to advance the small scale residential development proposals in due course. We suggest this is either through the identification of a settlement boundary or allocation to encompass the land shown outlined in red below.

(Site plan supplied)

Additional Site 005b- Land to north of Blair Castle Caravan Park, Blair Atholl

Atholl Estate wish to make the Cairngorms National Park Authority aware of the proposals in place for the woodland lodges on the land to the north of Blair Castle Caravan Park, Blair Atholl. Full planning consent was granted in March 1008 for the "Erection of 11 mobile holiday units on phase IA/18 and approval in principle for phases 2, 3 and 4" by Perth and Kinross Council (Application Ref.No.07/02438/FUL). The planning consent has been implemented and Phase I A is complete. The 2008 Planning Consent establishes the principle for chalet development on land forming the subject of this submission.

With regard to Phases 2, 3 and 4, Condition 2 of the Planning Consent states "the siting, design and external appearance of the development, the landscaping of the site, tree removal, all means of enclosure, the car parking and means of access to the site are not approved and will be subject to a further application".

The Site Analysis report accompanying the MIR ranks the site with a RED rating. The assessment criteria concludes there are no issues to address with regard to the sites relationship to the settlement of Blair Atholl, site access, accessibility to local transport, services and facilities (Green Rating). It appears that the case for ranking the site with a RED criteria

relates solely to the issue of red squirrels. The Ecological Report accompanying the MIR concludes that there are no notable plant species and the habitat comprises a coniferous woodland plantation with signs of red squirrel foraging.

We would note that the issue of red squirrels was considered in detail during the 2007 planning application for 11 mobile homes and development in principle for phases 2-4, and we enclose email correspondence from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) which considers the issue within the context of the Estate's Woodland Management Plan. This correspondence concludes that SNH have no objection to the proposal, on the basis that appropriate planning conditions were attached to the planning consent, as indeed has happened.

Atholl Estates are therefore concerned that a RED ranking has been suggested for a site which not only performs favourably against the LDP assessment criteria but that the single issue of red squirrels can be addressed through appropriate woodland management and habitat plans. This Estate plan to plant a hectare of squirrel replacement habitat during late winter but a specific boundary plan and planting schedule has not yet been written.

Atholl Estates will in time seek to deliver the subsequent phases of the chalet development. The Estate will strive to deliver a high quality, sympathetic development, which will enhance the unique natural environment at Blair Atholl. This is an objective they seek to achieve and deliver through every development project with which they are associated.

We request that the site analysis is revisited and the ranking revised to GREEN/AMBER, which recognises the need to address localised issues which can be overcome/mitigated against through an appropriate development solution. Furthermore, we request the site outlined in red below is continued into the Proposed Plan as a location for a chalet development (Site plan and Planning consent information supplied)

Additional Site 005c - Land at Old Nursery, Old Blair, Blair Atholl

Atholl Estates are seeking to establish the principle of a small scale high quality residential development on land known as the Old Nursery, Old Blair.

The ecology survey notes that there are no notable plant species, with the site offering suitable foraging habitat for badger and bats. An assessment rating of GREEN is provided for ecology. The landscape assessment discusses the sites characteristics, concluding the "high quality development essential with design relating/responding to estate architecture". The resulting rating provided is AMBER, yet the overall Site Analysis has concluded a RED rating, which suggests that the site is unacceptable for development and has significant constraints to address.

We strongly disagree that the site should be ranked as RED. Atholl Estates would only wish to promote a high quality development in this location, seeking to enhance rather than impact on the special qualities of the immediate and surrounding environment. The RED rating relates to the relationship of the site to the existing settlement. We recommend that the rating of the site is revised to GREEN/AMBER with the Estate undertaking to address any issues of concern through a detailed planning application submission.

We further request that the site, as shown on Figure I is continued into the Proposed Plan as a site for low density housing.

(Site plan supplied)

Additional Site 005d - Land at Black Island, Blair Atholl

Atholl Estates are considering the potential of the land at Black Island for a small scale chalet development. The Estate considers there may be the possibility of locating development on the footprints of the former wartime logging camp and/or the other derelict buildings on the site.

Initial plans are being prepared and Atholl Estates would wish to work with the Cairngorms National Park Authority to come forward with a very high quality development proposal, in keeping with the site and its unique natural environment. This use would complement the chalet

and caravan operation at Blair Atholl which provides a vital economic platform for the area.

The Site Analysis accompanying the MIR concludes with an overall rating of RED for the site. However, the landscape assessment considers there is the potential for mitigation "careful felling and ongoing management of wetland, careful design of lodges".

As such, Atholl Estates consider the site, identified by the red line plan below, is taken forward into the Proposed Plan for tourism related uses, including chalets.

(Site plan supplied)

Site comment - Site 005e - Goods Yard, Blair Atholl

Atholl Estates welcome the continued support provided for the established industrial/commercial use within the Main Issues Report and would note that in due course additional commercial units may be brought forward. As such, the LDP should make provision for the future growth of the good yard within the boundary shown in the MIR (enclosed below) .

(Site plan supplied)

Additional Site 005f/054 - Land at Garryside, Blair Atholl(H26)

The site at Garryside is presently allocated for residential development in the existing Perth & Kinross Council Highland Area Local Plan. The CNP Main Issues Report proposes the allocation of an alternative site for residential development as a result of the potential for flooding on the Garryside site. The Landscape Assessment accompanying the MIR notes "there is scope to extend development into the field with careful layout and design". The risk of flooding is the key factor in the site achieving an overall RED rating.

Atholl Estate recognises the flooding issue, as outlined within the Flood Risk Assessment undertaken by consulting engineers, Allen Gordon in 2003. A copy of the Flood Risk Assessment accompanies this submission.

Based on the findings of this FRA, it is evident that there is an area of land to the north of the site which is outwith the flood risk area and has the potential for small scale residential development, circa S-10 units. The Flood Risk Assessment will assist with the identification of the development site. The referenced OS Map Extract within the Flood Risk Assessment is at present unavailable and will be forwarded to the Local Development Plan team in due course. Atholl Estates request that a portion of the site is identified for residential development subject to appropriate flood mitigation on the basis of the sites central location within the village, and therefore accessibility to amenities and its ability to accommodate a sensitively designed residential development. No restriction on unit size or tenure should be set at this stage, but be the subject of a design study accompanying an eventual planning application.

(Detailed site information supplied)

Additional Site 005g- Land at Middle bridge, Old Bridge of Tilt

Atholl Estate are considering the development potential of their land interests at Middlebridge, Old Bridge of Tilt. Whilst there are no formal proposals in place for the site, the Estate were keen to notify the Park Authority of the potential for a small scale, sympathetic residential development, in keeping with the scale and nature of development in place at Bridge of Tilt and the surrounding area.

The landscape Assessment concluded that "a development here would be outside any need for apparent settlement envelope/boundary and have significant adverse impact on character". An overall site rating of RED is provided within the Site Analysis.

The Estate wish to continue to promote a sympathetically sited and designed development within the boundaries of the Middlebridge site outlined below and in keeping with the quality of development undertaken elsewhere within Atholl Estate.

(Site plan supplied)

Additional Land at Auldclune

Atholl Estates wish to promote an area of the land to the south west of the small settlement of Auldclune, as outlined in red on the site plan below.

The Estate wish to explore the potential of the site for a small scale, low density residential development, in keeping with the scale and nature of development in the locality of Auldclune.

The

Estate would welcome an opportunity to discuss the merits of the site with the National Park Authority.

(Site plan supplied)

Ref 101 Name Invermark Estate

Response

Ristol Ltd are instructed by Invermark Estate to highlight the need for policy framework that supports renewable technology and in particular hydro ventures, in the new LDP.

This approach is required to meet national policy objectives for diversifying Scotland's energy profile and a

recognition that renewable energy projects result in Important capita] investment in infrastructure and job creation within rural communities.

Within the context of hydro projects, it is Invermark Estate's position that a policy framework should come forward that:

1. recognises the wide range of technologies available,
2. does not the preclude the delivery of large scale hydro venture and
3. applies policy through a criteria based as opposed to site specific basis.

This land use strategy should seek to ensure that within a context of support in principle, the new LDP policies balance environmental assessment with economic benefit, to reflect the aims of the SPP. This could include supporting joint venture projects that involve community interest groups working with landowners and operators.

The Estate recognises the special landscape and environmental qualities of Invermark and the wider Park, and are committed to its protection and enhancement as a vibrant place to live and work.

Within this context, Invermark Estate would highlight the need to ensure the LDP supports investment in

infrastructure for remoter communities within the Park.

To what extent the LDP treats renewable policy as core policy theme or supplementary guidance requires

consideration in the preparation of the Proposed Plan.

Ref 102 Name Invercauld Estate

Response

Housing in countryside

We request that within Highland Perthshire, provision is made that Perth & Kinross Council's 2009

Housing. in the Countryside policy (enclosed) will continue to apply to relevant planning applications for

residential development in the countryside.

This approach will create design continuity and transparent policy application within Highland Perthshire.

(copy of P&K Council Housing in Countryside Policy supplied)

Additional Site 004 - Culsh Farm, Ballater

Ristol Ltd are working with the land owners Invercauld Estate to explore the development potential of the site for a high quality chalet development. We consider the proposals have the potential to meet the strategic objectives held by the Main Issues Report, include the desire "to ensure the Cairngorms National Park delivers an outstanding visitor experience and is an international benchmark for sustainable tourism".

The proposals remain at a draft stage and a significant amount of work is required to address all matters of access, layout, siting and design.

Despite the early stages of the design process, it was essential that the nature of the proposals were submitted to the Cairngorms National Park Authority for consideration as part of the LDP preparation process.

The overall site analysis has identified the site as having significant constraints relating to landscape, ecology and settlement relationship. The Landscape Assessment acknowledges the elevated site and the resulting development issues for access and built structures. The landscape assessment concludes that there is the potential to mitigate against these concerns but only if the numbers proposed are much reduced with "very careful siting of both buildings and access and careful design of chalets".

The suggested smaller number of chalets will result in a reduced land take from the site area provided. A fuller understanding of the Habitat survey and areas of particular sensitivity is required in advanced of progressing with a revised site planning exercise.

Design work is underway in consultation with the CNPA in terms of a masterplan for the site and the seeping of key issues, as raised in the Landscape and Ecological Reports. This work is set within a context of facilitating economic growth through tourism related development.

As such we would request the Proposed Plan provides for chalet related development on the site, as shown on the site location plan below. We would welcome meeting the LDP team to inform them of the work underway and emerging concepts in order to further understanding of the site and its potential to meet the land use aims of the LDP.

(Site plan supplied)

Ref 103 Name The House of Bruar Ltd

Response

Additional Site 53- House of Bruar 07

The House of Bruar welcome the continued allocation of the site for retail related development. However, the House of Bruar draw the CNPA's attention to land to south of site which was granted planning consent in I 0/0 1147/FLL for 300 car parking spaces, works to the B847 and the formation of a plaza to the front of the retail complex.

The planning conditions accompanying the consent were discharged during 20 11 to enable implementation and a copy of the consented layout accompanies this submission.

On behalf of the House of Bruar, we welcome the continued support for the business, which as the MIR notes is a major provider of employment within Highland Perthshire.

Furthermore, we request the Proposed Plan continues to allocate the site but extends this to include an area of land (red hatching) which encompasses the existing built development and the area of land granted planning consent in 20 1 0, as illustrated below.

(Site plan and Planning consent information supplied)

Ref 104 Name P Swan

Response

Paragraph 5.6 states: 'What can, on its own, have no adverse impact, when combined with several other small-scale developments, can create something unacceptable. This cumulative impact on the special qualities must be considered when finding solutions to protecting and enhancing the qualities that make the Park so special.'

Paragraph 5.6 refers to the cumulative impact of developments, implying that some foresight or thinking ahead is needed. It would be helpful for readers of the LDP if CNPA could include, for readers' education, examples of some of the main events since its inception where thinking ahead is demonstrated.

Paragraph 5.7 states: "The Local Development Plan must address the impact of climate change on the environment, and the effect it may have on the special qualities of the Park. With its mountainous core, and its glacial past, the Park has seen much change through time.

Adaptation to change is therefore important in all new development. Managing our habitats, their connectivity and quality, and functioning natural floodplains, as well as mitigation measures to reduce emissions are cross-cutting themes which should be seen in all new projects."

Paragraph 5.7 acknowledges a need to address the impact of climate change on the CNP's special qualities; this is very appropriate. However, reference in the same paragraph to measures to reduce emissions confuses the reader, as this is a rather different matter. I would suggest this reference be removed, in line with my comments on climate change elsewhere in this document.

Paragraph 5.11 states: "Although often intangible, certain information does exist that can help us direct development in a way that protects and enhances the special qualities. This information must, however be used with care. The special qualities are not simply a list of features which can be ticked off when considering a development proposal. They are what makes the Park important and must be treated as such."

This sounds rather pompous and rather patronising. Can CNPA explain in simple English exactly what this means, with examples?

Question 1. I would prefer that the current approach, Option 1, be retained, because do not wish to see CNPA exercising its discretion without proper controls.

Section 6 needs more structure. It is poorly laid out and leaves the reader confused about what the point is that is being made. Also, the language is too "visionary" and needs to be more down to earth.

Question no. 4. MIR page 37 (Issue 4- Housing/Affordable Housing)

How and where can we meet the housing need in our communities - open market, affordable, local needs?

Summary response:

- Ballater's affordable housing requirement remains unclear and this uncertainty needs to be accommodated by the delivery methodology.
- I see no justification for new open market housing in Ballater, in view of the number of not-normally-occupied dwellings.
- I do not believe Option 1 (current approach) or Option 3 (preferred approach) are appropriate to Ballater's housing challenges.
- I would support a variant on Option 2, as described below.
- A more innovative approach to funding of affordable housing in Ballater is needed, irrespective of which option is adopted. Impending changes to legislation in relation to increased council tax charges on some categories of not-normally-occupied dwellings may facilitate the freeing up of supplies of affordable homes, thus making CNPA's policy redundant in Ballater.

Detailed response:

Unclear requirement for affordable housing. I am concerned that I found no evidence in the documentation of a clear definition of the requirement for housing at the settlement level, neither for Ballater, nor any other location.

Table 17 on pages 34 and 35 of the MIR gives details by settlement of the status of current permissions, allocations and effectiveness, ie land supply and phasing of building over a 20 year period.

Estimates of the number of affordable houses needed across the Park have varied widely and CNPA has specified no numbers for Ballater. This uncertainty needs to be accommodated, preferably by adopting a flexible delivery method.

The need for new open market housing. I see no need for new open market housing at this time. This is demonstrated by the large number of not normally-occupied properties in Ballater, owned by people either as an "investment", a second home, a holiday "let" or a future retirement home. These properties make up more than 25 per cent of all dwellings in Ballater, which represents a redundant surplus of open market housing in Ballater and a source of frustration for local (especially young) people who cannot compete in the open market and are thus reliant on other arrangements, or having to leave Ballater. Large scale development of primarily open market housing, with a proportion of the total as affordable, will aggravate the proliferation of not-normally-occupied properties, and exacerbate this problem.

Option 1 (current approach); Option 3 (CNPA preference). I do not favour the preferred option (Option 3). It is insufficiently differentiated from the current approach (Option 1), to which I am also opposed. In so far as it differs from the existing approach, Option 3 takes the wrong direction, because it appears to permit opportunities for the arbitrary imposition of more ad hoc private development than the current approach. This would not be in the interests of the Ballater community.

I am concerned that the documentation appears to treat the subject of housing numbers as a purely economic exercise, with limited regard for community integrity or cohesion. In communities like Ballater this will, over time, put those communities at risk, both socially and economically, as the village loses its appeal to people as a place to visit. Ballater needs an alternative to the existing approach but not the "preferred approach" offered as Option 3.

Under Options 1 and 3, the provision of affordable housing would take place at a pace to suit the developer, which might not meet the housing needs of residents. Indeed, I understand that the future development of BL/H1 is effectively "on hold" pending the convenience of the developer (refer to

minutes of BOVOF Housing Partnership meeting dated 9th September 2011).

There are indications that development of BI/H1 is going to be delayed due to the current house market conditions, so the start date for affordable homes is already held up by the open market.

Option 2. This focuses all new development on the provision of affordable housing by only identifying sites for 100 per cent affordable housing (bearing in mind the existing consents) and is a more appropriate approach to dealing with Ballater's affordable housing needs.

CNPA's appraisal of Option 2 includes the following comments:

- "Shows sites that have planning permission already."

- "Focuses new development solely on the provision of much needed affordable development.
- "Relies on all new development finding appropriate funding streams to ensure projects are economically viable.
- "With limited land identified there will be little new development other than that which has permission already, limiting the amount of affordable development."

The 3rd comment seems to imply that Option 2 is at a distinct disadvantage against other options, which are claimed to offer a source of funding from the developer to the extent of 25% of all dwellings. This is liable to misinterpretation, because the contribution from the developer is in serviced plots only (at a discount- not free of charge) rather than completed homes. Money still has to be found to buy these plots and build the houses, so there is probably minimal, if any advantage financially in Options 1 and 3 over Option 2.

The 4th comment above on Option 2 seems to suggest that there will be a drying up of the supply of affordable housing because no further land will have been released for open market housing. I believe there is capacity within the existing settlement boundary for many affordable homes, which would be adequate for the foreseeable future. The stock of affordable housing in Ballater could be sustainable over the long term if it remained affordable in perpetuity. Thus my preference would be for rented affordable housing, in order to prevent "leakage" into the private sector. I repeat there is no quantified requirement for new open market housing. The balance of housing numbers between open market and affordable homes in Ballater can be better managed if not-normally-occupied dwellings are included in the equation, as a potential housing resource. In this respect, I note that the Scottish Government is considering the possibility of allowing local authorities to raise council tax levels significantly on certain categories of not-normally-occupied dwellings, for the purpose of encouraging owners to make these properties available for rent or sale. Consultation of the public on this new legislation is underway at present.

My own proposal for provision of affordable housing comprises the following main elements:

- a) Focus on affordable housing only,
- b) Abandon BI/BI as a development site,
- c) Identify and allocate brown field and infill locations for building small numbers of affordable homes inside the village boundary and
- d) Identify existing properties potentially suitable for conversion to affordable housing.

This is a variant on Option 2 offered (but not recommended) on page 37 of the MIR. I believe the approach that I am advocating would:

- A) Provide a more natural way to integrate affordable homes into the community than by placing small groups of affordable houses into a new open market development.
- B) Alleviate the dependency of affordable housing supply on the development of open market housing, for which there is currently minimal local demand.
- C) Benefit from easier access to services immediately local to the development I redevelopment site, helping to bring down the cost of affordable homes.
- D) Enable the pace of development of affordable homes to meet the emerging understanding of the real need, which is currently unclear.
- E) Protect the integrity of Ballaters setting and community, both of which are vital to its economic survival.
- F) Enable more of the construction work to be carried out by local builders.
- G) Help with improvement of existing buildings in the older part of the village as a result of their conversion to affordable homes.

Funding of affordable housing. CNPA has confirmed that, as of 5th August 2011, it had had no formal assurances from any organisation regarding the availability of funding for affordable housing on BL/H1. So, it seems that Options 1 and 3 do not offer any financial advantage over our proposed alternative.

Due to the present economic circumstances, a more creative approach to the funding of affordable housing is needed, irrespective of which option is pursued.

Question no. 8, MIR page 53 (Issue 5-Spatial Strategy)

How and where should development happen in the National Park?

Summary response.

- Housing development beyond Monaltrie Park will lead to alienation of its residents from the existing community.
- Monaltrie Park must not become landlocked by housing development but allowed to expand as needed to accommodate additional recreation facilities, especially for young people.
- Climate change may result in the reclassification of the farm land at BL/H1 from Class 3.2 to Class 3.1, at which level of quality there is a presumption against development.

Detailed response:

Separation of BL/HI from Ballater. The concept of building out H1 beyond Monaltrie Park leads to the following probable outcome:

- a) The open market housing on BL/H1 is likely to be bought largely by older people (40-60 years) in-migrating from other areas.
- B) In winter, elderly residents will not move around on foot or by bicycle, but will resort to their cars.
- C) They will attempt to drive to Ballater but, with up to 250 additional households, will find traffic congestion and parking a problem.
- D) So, they will drive, or take a bus, in the other direction to Aboyne for their shopping.
- E) The consequence will be social and physical separation of HI residents from the rest of this community and impoverishment of local businesses in Ballater.

Constraints on Monaltrie Park. Under the proposed spatial strategy for Ballater, Monaltrie Park would become restricted and land-locked by housing development. When the widely known problem of the lack of facilities for Ballater youth begins to be addressed effectively, as it must, it is highly likely that Ballater youth will want to have planning applications submitted for outdoor recreation facilities, some of which will demand significant amounts of space, such as a skate board park, BMX track, etc. These will have no other place to go than Monaltrie Park. This issue requires active attention, as it does not appear to have been addressed at all in any of the consultation documents. Thus, new housing should not be located north east of the existing Monaltrie Park. New housing, if it were justified in numbers beyond the capacity of the other sites that have been identified for affordable housing, would be better located inside and close to the entrance to Monaltrie Park, and be progressively "topped up" over the very long term by further development- if Ballater decides that it wants to expand physically. Monaltrie Park's north eastern boundary could be "elastic", moving out as needed to accommodate new recreational facilities. The only thing that would need to move in an expansion scenario is the south western boundary of Monaltrie Park and maybe some of the recreation facilities. This would offer two benefits:

- Residents of new housing would live closer to the rest of the community.
- The constraint on development of additional outdoor facilities that already exists in Monaltrie Park would be lifted.

By locating Monaltrie Park beyond its present location, access to the park for primary school pupils might be impeded. If this were to become a problem, it could be overcome by converting part of the primary school grounds to a playing field. There is no reason why Monaltrie Park cannot be located beyond (but probably still overlapping) its existing footprint.

Land quality at BL/HI. The Macaulay Land Use Research Institute has indicated that, as a result of climate change over the next few decades, there is a significant probability that the farm land on BL/HI would be upgraded from Class 3 Division 2 to Class 3 Division 1, at which level of quality there is a presumption against development, which, if it proceeded, would lead to permanent loss of good quality farm land.

Ref 105 Name Kingussie & Vicinity Community Council

Response

Kingussie & Vicinity Community Council wish to make the following representations with regard to the new Cairngorms National Park Draft Local Plan for 2012-17:

General Infrastructure We do not believe the current general infrastructure of Kingussie to be viable should there be a significant increase in its population. Although a new water treatment works is planned (hopefully to commence sometime in 2012), there is no plan to replace or upgrade the associated sewers and water pipes in the town, some of which are believed to date from the nineteenth century.

Our current medical centre is undersized and under resourced, and there is only one dental practice in Kingussie, providing mostly private treatment. We also believe that the range of treatments provided at our local hospital could be increased thus saving unnecessary journeys to Inverness, eg: the development of telemedicine facilities. Residential care facilities for the elderly are inadequate, specifically specialist residential care for dementia sufferers. The provision of respite care, both day and residential is also sadly lacking.

The High School is full to capacity and has poor quality buildings, despite remedial works having taken place over the last twelve months.

We are not sure exactly what the CNPA can do to alleviate these problems, other than to consider very carefully about the type of development they are willing to permit. Hopefully this will not be to the detriment of the people who actually live in Kingussie.

Affordable Housing and Accommodation for an Ageing Population We know that the Cairngorms National Park Authority are aware of the ageing demographic within the Highlands. We are also very aware that the population in Kingussie is an ageing one and that sheltered housing is an issue, including suitable extra care sheltered housing or to be more precise, the lack of it. Given that there are plans to foist a significant amount of new housing upon our community, a reasonable proportion of this should comprise housing suitable for the elderly plus housing, appropriate both in cost and design, to give our younger people the opportunity to have homes of their own. We have serious concerns regarding area HI which is zoned for housing and granted permission in principle for "up to 300" houses. We would point out that from that original allocation of 300, 125 have already been built over preceding years. Kingussie has been recognised by the RCAHMS as a prime example of a "planned Victorian town". We are naturally concerned that we will lose the ambience which exists in the town by inappropriate, high density

housing development.

Economic Activity Our community is attempting to improve its local economy and those of surrounding villages by acquiring the site of the former Kingussie Folk Museum by a community company, Am Fasgadh Regeneration Company (Kingussie) Limited (ARC- Kingussie for short) working in partnership with other community bodies, in order to turn the site into a destination craft village with associated development along with the site of our new learning and resource centre. It is hoped that this will bring much needed employment and increased foot fall to the town. This is part of a community led three- pronged approach to aid the economic regeneration of Kingussie, the other prongs being the proposed development of the Courthouse by the Kingussie Business Forum and the Highland Council, the development of a Town Trail: a Community Council led initiative in partnership with the ARC- Kingussie, Kingussie Business Forum, Kingussie Community Development Company, Kingussie Parish Church and the RSPB. However, there are areas of land immediately adjacent to the museum site which are shown on the existing local plan as "white ground" which we would like to see taken into the area zoned for Economic Development (ED2) where possible. We value the help and assistance given by the Park and look forward to working with the Park to take forward these exciting developments.

Communications Infrastructure It is vital that small rural communities have access to the best electronic communications infrastructure possible, enabling them to compete effectively with world commerce. Anything that the Park Authority can do to further this aim has our full support as anything which improves the potential of our small businesses to compete strongly within the wider business community has to be good news.

Accessibility and Transport We believe that much needs to be done if the CNPA's vision of sustainable development is to be achieved. Public transport in Badenoch and Strathspey is woefully inadequate and an integrated public transport system virtually non existent. At present this leaves very little option other than to use a car, should people wish to travel. It is essential that any policy reflects the need for fully integrated efficient transport services. Kingussie is greatly disadvantaged, as are other Park communities on the main rail line south by not being included in the Flexipass network which exists within other parts of the Highlands, for example on the Inverness- Nairn route and Inverness northwards. Flexipass offers much discounted rail travel and increased travel flexibility to residents. This injustice could easily be championed by CNPA and would be much appreciated by residents.

General Environment We are very proud of our town and the area in which it is situated, and are sure that other communities feel the same way about where they live. One way in which the CNPA can definitely help to maintain our environment is to make sure that appropriate mammal and ecological surveys are carried out, to minimise the possibility of unsuitable development. For example, we have a strong red squirrel population, which is spread throughout a large area of the town. It is also believed that there may be a good chance of Scottish Wildcats in the area, as they have been seen on a photo trap just four miles down the road at the Highland Wildlife Park. The Park is situated on the same side of the valley as Kingussie, which is easily within range of Scottish Wildcats. The habitat at the back of Kingussie (to the North) is ideal for Scottish Wildcat being a mixture of wood and moorland with an abundance of birds, rabbits and other small mammals.

The area of woodland in Kingussie, between West Terrace and the conifer plantation on the South slope of Creag Bheag, is the last piece of relict ancient Birch forest remaining in the village. Originally this forest ran along the South and South East lower slopes of the Monadhliath Mountains extending from Creag Dhubh beyond Newtonmore to Kinveachy and the river

Dulnain. It has been lost over much of its length by clearing and development. This is the reason for its withdrawal from the Kingussie local plan. In the last ten years this tract of forest has been found to contain species of mycorrhizal fungi not previously recorded from the U.K. but known from the Boreal areas of Scandinavia. Many other species are present which are known from other sites, but are rare and are also indicators of the continuous presence of Birch and Aspen for thousands of years. It is inevitable that invertebrates that depend on these species will also be present. It would be highly irresponsible to further reduce the extent of this amenity woodland for any development, so we ask that it be zoned on the new plan as "Environmental" to help protect it for future generations.

To sum up: We do not make any apologies for our failure to comment on Park Wide issues as our concerns are only for Kingussie. However we realise that many of the issues we have raised are just as relevant to the wider community of which we form a small part.

Ref 106 Name Cairngorms Business Partnership

Response

1 Introduction

The Cairngorms Business Partnership (CBP) is pleased to respond to the consultation opened by the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) on their second National Park Plan (NPP2). The CBP recognise the complex nature of NPP2 and that the CNPA will engage with many interest groups during the course of the consultation.

The CBP recognise the purpose of the National Park Authority is to ensure that the four National Park aims are collectively achieved in relation to the National Park in a co-ordinated way and that the CNPA must draw up a National Park Plan, with a view to accomplishing this purpose. The CBP recognise that the four aims are interdependent and that the fourth aim; To promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities' is fundamental to the achievement of the first three aims and can only be delivered by thriving local businesses and communities. We recognise that the structure of the economy of the CNP is based on a wide spectrum of business and that NPP2 should consider how strategies can reach diverse businesses and communities in order to enable every size of businesses to prosper and invest in order to develop robust local economies. The CBP therefore is focussing this response on economic development of communities in the CNP as identified in the fourth aim of the National Parks (Scotland) Act.

It is not the intention of the CBP to isolate the 4th aim - we believe the achievement of NPP2 will depend on robust local business and communities having the confidence to invest both money and time and into the delivery of the Cairngorms National Park Authority National Park Plan 2012 – 2017. Cabinet Secretary John Swinney's key note speech at CBP's annual conference on 18 November 2011 however, emphasised the Government's "priority of priorities", namely that the main focus of the Government was on "economic growth". He reiterated that this wasn't "economic growth at any price", hence our acknowledgement of the importance of sustainable development to "turning rhetoric into reality" and the expectation that all public agencies will effectively contribute to this objective.

With the Government putting an emphasis on the low carbon economy and support for tourism development, the Cabinet Secretary saw major advantages in the work of the CBP in helping to achieve some of the Government's aims, namely;

- It is seen as an exemplar in collaboration.
- It punches above its weight
- It is an example of businesses working together enabling the public and private sectors and communities to more effectively work towards common goals.

The CBP's response has therefore focussed on how we can effectively facilitate the development of a robust economy in all areas and sectors of the CNP and the support and collaborative working we need from the public sector to achieve this.

The CBP has developed this manifesto through an open and transparent process. To date a working group of 8 members, the CBP board of 14, delegates numbering 85 who attended to Business Conference workshop on 18th November and an online survey that drew 111 responses have been considered during the process of drawing up this document. In December links to the online survey were shared with members, non members, community companies, community councils, business associations and the FSB.

The CBP feel it appropriate to respond to the consultation through the development of a Business Manifesto that seeks to identify the key drivers of economic development, rather than attempting to fit responses into the pre-set question structures within the consultation documentation. However, consideration of the question and answer format within the consultation process will be complied with, to ensure recognition and record of the CBP response.

It is essential that the final NPP2 reflects the economic reality of the times in which we live. The life of this NPP is likely to see further economic hardships, so must reflect these conditions. With this backdrop, the business community wishes to see a prioritisation of effort, resource, and capabilities towards building a competitive local economy which can safeguard existing jobs and business. Our economy is fragile and requires every support possible, to ensure the continuing survival of the NP's communities. Much of the CNP economy is dependent on tourism and exports of goods and services so it is essential that the final NPP2 reflects national economic reality. Innovative solutions, joint working between all sectors and a supportive business environment will be critical to enabling business to play a part in finding solutions to the expected significant reduction in public sector funding.

The Cairngorms National Park is one of the most desirable areas in the UK to live, work and visit. The area is defined by its special qualities, the diversity of its communities and cultures, its protected areas, recreational opportunities and standing as a National Park. National Geographic Traveller magazine voted the Cairngorms National Park as one of the top 20 places in the world to visit. National Park status and its geographic identity can bring significant opportunities to businesses and the communities in which they operate - the challenge is to support business to realise this potential. The CBP sees the desired outcome of NPP2 to deliver "that the CNP is an attractive and positive place to do business."

2 Key Statement and Drivers for Sustainable Growth

Key Statement:

To achieve the desired outcome the CBP seeks the development of a Cairngorms Economic Development and Diversification Strategy. Such a strategy should sit alongside others that will shape the future of the Cairngorms National Park. The initiative will bring the multiple stakeholders to one table in a meaningful and effective way.

To deliver the strategy requires the formation of the Cairngorms Enterprise (CEF) Forum to achieve a unified approach to the delivery of economic growth for the area.

The CBP also wish to see a greater level of business experience and understanding within the CBP Board through closer working with the CBP membership and private sector.

The CBP sees two strategic issues or Drivers for Sustainable Growth that need to be addressed in the Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012 - 2017:

1. Sustainable Businesses in the Community: Stimulation of sustainable economic growth in strong, confident and capable communities.
2. Infrastructure: Viable and improving services to meet evolving demand to enable the potential of businesses in the CNPA to be realised.

3 Economic Development and Diversification Strategy

The Cairngorms National Park is a place of outstanding beauty, dramatic landscapes with unique cultures, diverse industries and people. It is however, a place with complex and multi layered intervention by several public sector bodies. The CNP straddles two Enterprise areas, five local authority areas and three VisitScotland areas, so creating a complex agency 'landscape'. However delegates at the Business Conference felt that opportunities are being lost as a result of the area not having a distinct and focussed economic development plan. Single authority areas have distinct economic strategies, giving clarity of purpose and responsibility across stakeholder roles. In contrast the CNP has no clear economic development strategy. The Moray Economic Strategy, that is undergoing a consultation provides an example of a process, outlines such a comprehensive and focussed approach:

http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_75361.html

Cairngorms Business Partnership

The CBP considers that the draft NPP2 does not contain a satisfactory focus or content to enable

sustainable economic development of different areas of the CNP. Of the 10 Five Year Outcomes identified

in the draft NPP2 the business community are disappointed that only one Outcome is targeted at economic growth; NPP2 Consultation page 42 Outcome 6 The economy of the park will have grown and

diversified drawing on the Park's special qualities. Furthermore the resulting 'benefits' and 'achievements'

do not provide confidence in the business community that consideration has been given to wider aspects

of economic development. Successful delivery of the NPP2 is dependent on competitive and robust local

businesses however to enable this, a co-ordinated. Focused approach is essential.

Summary of survey response - Q 1: Do you believe the CNP as an area requires a focussed economic development strategy? 104 responses: Yes 93 (89.4%) No 11 (10.6%)

4 CNP Enterprise Forum

As a consequence of the public sector landscape outlined above, the area lacks a clear, coherent economic

development strategy within NPP2. Formation of a CNP Enterprise Forum, charged with the economic

development agenda within NPP2 (Chaired by the private sector with: SE, HIE, PKC, Angus, Aberdeenshire,

Moray, Highland, CNPA, UHI, SCC and FSB) is therefore essential to achieve the area's full potential, given

the current challenging economic conditions. The Forum will be made up of senior personnel from each of

the organisations party to the Economic Development and Diversification Strategy.

The CNP Enterprise Forum will bring together decision makers and senior personnel from each of the

public sector stakeholders and private sector to deliver the economic strategy for the CNP.

This enterprise forum will place the business community, customer and demand at the heart of its

deliberations and subsequent actions. The CEF will also identify targets across economic measurement

tools utilised by the enterprise agencies. From this the CEF will set appropriate timetables for delivery.

The CEF should consider how strategies can reach smaller businesses and communities in order to effect change at all levels of business.

The CBP also seek closer alignment of tourism and business development strategies between Scottish

Enterprise and HIE and local authorities. The CBP will be pleased to assist towards this goal through the work of the Cairngorms Economic Forum.

Summary of survey response - Q 2 do you support the idea of a new CNP Enterprise Forum and what might its priorities be in your view? 104 Responses: Yes: 85 (82.5%) No 18 (17.5%)

5 Drivers for Sustainable Business Growth

The area must be seen as a dynamic and innovative place to do business that is based upon the premise

that a "can do" approach is taken. The overall identity of the place to do business must be seen to be

positive, welcoming and supportive by both the private and public sectors. In addition the 'legislative

landscape' must be seen to be positive and reflecting the Scottish Government's agenda for economic

growth. To support that ambition the CBP has identified two key drivers for sustainable growth:

1. Sustainable Businesses in the Community: Stimulation of sustainable economic growth in strong,

confident and capable communities.

2. Infrastructure: Viable and improving services to meet evolving demand to enable the potential of

businesses in the CNPA to be realised.

Summary of survey response - Q 3: Do you agree with the two drivers for growth and what have we missed? 100 Responses: Yes 90 (90%) No 10 (10%)

5.1 Driver 1: Sustainable Businesses in the Community - The CBP view the following issues as priorities within the National park Plan:

5.1.1 Training and retention of skills:

The CNP must be a place that attracts develops and retains talent. There is a need to increase the

capacity and skill of local business and to that end the CBP seek that: CNPA, Business Gateway (Highlands, Moray Aberdeenshire and P&K) and CBP develop a long term training and capacity development programme with the CBP as the main delivery mechanism.

- The CBP would welcome and support the Scottish Chambers of Commerce call for training in employment and a shift of funding from employability training to employment incentive programmes where funding can create jobs in the workplace to workplace funded training.

HIE and SE provides funding for businesses to take on new graduates to give them 'graduate level'

experience to help them into work. At the moment this is only provided to companies that are account managed by HIE and SE. CBP wish to see such restrictions eased to increase added value

learning to all local businesses.

Summary of survey response - Q 4 Have we included the right points regarding Training and Retention of Skills and what else needs to be included? 94 Responses: Yes 88 (93.6%) No 6 (6.4%)

5.1.2 Income Generation

Within the economic development strategy there must be a clear focus on targeting income growth in key identified sectors. Targeting will be set against the identified industry clusters within the CNP 2010 Economic baseline Report. Agreement of targets will be reached through the Cairngorms Economic Forum.

5.1.3 Business Development Guidelines.

A set of Business Development Guidelines needs to be adopted by the CNPA Board that will increase the attractiveness of investing in the area. These guidelines will set out a positive roadmap to planning and subsequent inward investment in the CNP that will be aligned to the development of key target sectors.

- Adequate building approvals given to meet housing shortages for staff
- Identification of business development parks
- Provision of office and appropriate manufacturing business units in settlements across the CNP
- Identification of land to support business start up facilities
- Planning support to pursue the ambition of the CNP as a place associated with innovative research, education and leading best practice in the hospitality, outdoor recreation and environmental protection studies
- Support of community associations working with partner retailers to help structure development of retail premises operating in the area. (Example of Ballater business association seeking the development of a preferred and ethical trader in preference to a large multi-national taking a site in the town.

Summary of survey response - Q 5 Have we included the right points within the Business Development Guidelines and what else needs to be included?

5.1.4 Regulation and Red Tape

Regulation, it's over application can cause delay, frustration and costs to business. The cumulative

effect can be severe. There must be a strategic approach across all stakeholder groups to drive down legislative bureaucracy and its impacts on business activities. The CBP Business Barometer

survey gathers information for over 100 businesses each quarter and reports that bureaucracy is the highest single perceived barrier to growth.

- The CNP Economic Forum will be charged to identify bureaucratic hurdles for business and create an environment across each agency to eliminate duplication, delay and barriers.

Summary of survey response - Q 6 Given the CBP business barometer consistently tells us current bureaucracy stifles business growth, can you give an example(s) within your business.

5.1.5 Building a Positive Identity.

The CBP recognise that the appeal of the CNP is due, in the main, to the wide variety of cultures, landscapes and communities. As a place to live, work and visit it is in growing demand.

Management of that growth is critical to the future.

Tourism is the single most important sector, accounting for almost 30% of all value added business created in the park (£115m) and employs around 3600 people. (Source CNPA Economic

Baseline Study 2011) The report estimate that of the 197 industries which exist in the Park, 74 have some relationship to tourism. According to this analysis, tourism contributes more as a percentage of the GDP of the economy in the Cairngorms than in any other area of Scotland. Tourism promotion and development of the 'brand' is supported by various quality programmes, marketing campaigns, brand guidelines and is aligned with the CNPA Sustainable Tourism Strategy. Each initiative seeks to enhance the customer awareness of the area, their experience when visiting and the sustainability of the sector.

- There must be a wider and better understanding within the CNPA regarding brand development and its role to support and work with other established brands operating

within the CNP.

- The CBP is keen that alongside such 'brand development' for tourism that there is a proportionate effort directed towards enhancing the identity of the place as a welcoming place to do business for sectors other than tourism and will seek recognition of this within the economic Development and Diversification Strategy.

Summary of survey response - Q 7 Are we correct to recognise the need to enhance the identity of the area as a place to do business and if so what specific action would you suggest? 101

Responses: Yes 93 (92.1%) No 8 (7.9%)

5.2 Driver 2: Infrastructure - Viable and improving services to meet future needs

The CNP is in the Highlands of Scotland. Rather than being a restriction to growth, such a location is a clear

benefit and asset for the future. It is however, vital that the area has the infrastructure to enhance and

develop existing and new businesses.

5.2.1 Transport

- on board mobile and Wi-Fi services on all train rolling stock and commuter buses.

- increased train service frequency and reduced travel times to the central belt.

- buses must be able to carry cycles and it must be easier to carry cycles on trains

- better connectivity and co-ordination between train and bus service timetables.

- be supportive towards the establishing of a haulage transport distribution hub, improving delivery of fresh produce.

- Adequate bus timetables to meet seasonal demand at key locations.

- creation of a tourist circular route attracting visitors into and across the CNP from the south and east

- Improved airport connections.

Summary of survey response - Q8 Have we included the right points within the Transport section and what else needs to be included?

5.2.2 Mobile and Broadband Connectivity

The local economy is disadvantaged as a result of poor and unreliable mobile and broadband service provision. Creative, energetic people want to live and work in the area. To become a competitive destination, attract new industry, investment and creative people we must be in a position to offer seamless communications services. NPP2 should include the following:

- 3 and 4G mobile connectivity to all settlements by 2017.

- a positive approach by the CNPA planning department to mast placement and assistance to see mobile communications improved.

- superfast broadband to all communities and businesses.

Summary of survey response - Q9 Have we included the right points regarding Mobile and Broadband Connectivity and what else needs to be included?

6 Diversification of the Economy - Centre of Academic Excellence.

The Cairngorms National Park is by its very nature an area that relies heavily upon the land to support our

main business sectors. Such an economy that is heavily dependent upon one resource is inherently weak.

To have a truly sustainable economy here in the CNP the CBP seeks as a priority that adoption of an

Economic Development and Diversification Strategy and the formation of a Centre of Academic Excellence.

As a key element of the economic diversification strategy the CBP seeks the formation of a strategic

working group to look expressly at the potential of attracting centres of further education and

research

excellence to the area. The strategy should look to all academic institutions based near or around the CNP.

It is also recognised that attracting such 'campus' type facilities brings with it challenges in adapting to

new demographic groups living in the CNP.

Other than Glenmore Lodge National Outdoor Training Centre and the CNP area is the only part of the

Highlands that does not host any key element of the UHI or other academic research facilities.

We are

ideally placed with; hospitality and land-management based sector credentials within the area to host

such centres of excellence. Although not seen as traditional business sectors for the area, the CBP see

such a diversification as vital to attracting a variety of skills, income levels and a new dimension to 'life in

the park'.

The CBP has met with the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) who are in turn supportive

towards this strategy. UHI have expressed a willingness to engage with the CBP and the Cairngorms

Economic Forum to contribute, where possible, to the successful delivery of further education, links with

local businesses and a stronger presence of UHI in the area.

The Swedish ski and outdoor leisure destination of Are has developed a strategy to develop the economic

potential of not just the winter and summer tourism product but has identified the potential of attracting

high level and leading edge research and development companies. Association with such sectors under a

2020 vision is set to drive forward a diversification of the economy and in so doing will attract upper end

salaried posts, increased employment opportunities and bring additional wealth to the area.

Summary of survey response - Q 10 Do you believe that the area would benefit from such a strategy and can you give examples where you see such opportunities?

7 Business and the CNPA Board

The CBP recognises the current make-up of the CNPA board being a requirement by law is a mix of elected

and appointed positions. This arrangement, we believe, creates a challenge for the CNPA Board in terms

of flexibility within the Board to meet a spread of skills and knowledge to fully appreciate the needs of the

business sector. With the adoption of a an Economic Development and Diversification Strategy there is an

opportunity for the CNPA Board and the private sector through the CBP to work closer and build greater

understanding. To assist in this process The CBP outlines the following action:

- CNPA Board – skills needs assessment. The CBP wish to help increase the business awareness and

understanding on the CNPA board. The business community look to the CNPA board to take on

personnel who meet all or some of the following skills/experience: employer, investor, senior business manager.

- CNPA board member to be nominated to sit on the CBP board and in addition an allowance of one

other to attend on a rotation basis so gaining a wider awareness of Business matters.

- CBP Board members to attend CNPA board meetings in addition to the current standing invitation

basis to build a wider understanding of CNPA dealings.

Summary of survey response - Q11 Do you believe that decision making in the area would benefit from such an approach?

8 Annex 1 The Scottish Government Economic Strategy 2011

The Scottish Government stated in the recent Spending Review (September 2011): Our national parks are national tourism assets and the sustainable approach to visitor management will continue to be developed to balance the needs of visitors, communities and conservation to deliver high quality destinations.

Overview of the Government Economic Strategy

The updated Government Economic Strategy – published on 12th September 2011 - sets out how the Scottish Government will continue to make full use of the levers currently devolved to the Scottish Parliament in order to deliver on the Purpose established in 2007:

to focus the Government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.

The Government Economic Strategy sets the overarching economic framework – such as a competitive business environment, an effective justice system that protects property rights, an integrated and resource efficient economy and a skilled and adaptable workforce – which is conducive to sustained economic growth.

Through the Purpose framework the Strategy identifies the key components of faster sustainable economic growth – Productivity, Competitiveness and Resource Efficiency, Participation in the Labour Market and Population Growth – and our desired characteristics of growth – Solidarity, Cohesion, and Sustainability.

The very heart of the Government strategy is stated: Section C: Strategic Priorities

C1 Supportive Business Environment “Sustainable tourism” is identified as one of the Growth Sectors. (p45) The “development of a refreshed Tourism strategy, implemented by the industry-led Tourism Leadership Group” is one of the particular actions being taken on growth sectors. (p46)

C2 Transition to a Low Carbon Economy Tourism is one of the sectors identified where the transition to a low-carbon economy will create opportunities, particularly in rural Scotland, and that through appropriate infrastructure development the SG will “enable private investment to take advantage of these”. (p52). This will contribute towards the SG’s cohesion target.

Under Maximising the social and economic opportunities of Energy and Resource Efficiency, tourism is a growth sector that depends on the quality of the natural environment. (p55)

Under Encouraging consumer and business demand for low carbon goods and services, tourism is one of “many sectors” where “there are clear opportunities for aligning the ‘brand characteristics’ of Scotland’s high quality, ‘natural’ products with this growing demand.” (p57).

C4 Infrastructure Development and Place Under Transport, the SG “will ... focus investment on making connections across, within and to/ from Scotland better, improving reliability and journey times, seeking to maximise the opportunities for employment, business, leisure and tourism; ...”(p78)

C5 Effective Government Actions taken to support economic recovery included VisitScotland’s support for Homecoming and the Perfect Day marketing campaigns, which “helped Scotland’s Tourism industry remain resilient”. (p85)

SG actions as part of Streamlining our Dealings with Business include “working with the industry advisory groups (IAGs) to maximise their contribution to Scotland’s economic development, challenging how the public sector supports the work and aspirations of the IAGs as well as identifying the synergies between sectors, sharing best practice and enhancing the role of industry leadership and collaboration in driving policy” (p86)

Also submitted - Associated paper; CBP Online Survey Results and Associated paper; CBP Business Barometer 2011-2011)

Ref 107 Name Bryan Wright

Response

Issue 4 - Affordable housing

I do not agree with the preferred option. Option 2 should be adopted as the other two result in a large volume of open market housing which is neither needed or wanted. Many of the houses become second homes which do very little to contribute to the economy of the Park. Sites should be identified for provision of only affordable houses.

Issue 3 - Support for communities - I agree with preferred Option 2

Issue Ballater - Further open market housing is not required. Site to the NE of settlement should be used for recreation and environmental facilities, plus some affordable housing.

Ref 108 Name Sheila Potter

Response

1. Preservation of the rural ambience, preservation of creeping urbanisation. Preservation of rare species.
2. they are more descriptions of the practicalities of living within the CNP.
3. The amazing opportunity it offers for education and research in a unique environment.
4. omit 5.1, 5.3. Page 20 option – use brown field sites, including renovation of old farm houses and barns, etc. Protect all virgin land and agricultural land from concrete cover.
5. Two recent developments make the preservation of farm land vital: 1) the campaigns by CBP and DMO to promote “good food experience” with emphasis on local produce; 2) potential increase in the world population to 10 billions. This will increase the value of farm land. All land that can produce food must be protected.
6. preserve biodiversity, increase local food production, preserve water sources and flood plains.
7. A yes, B yes with emphasis on education and research
8. A yes
9. A yes B emphasis on 2, 4, 6
10. B involve JMT. Ask for deposit to cover eventual removal as a condition of planning consent
11. A yes
12. A yes, B maybe, C farming and food processing should be included
13. B Do not tack on urban suburbs to rural villages. C If possible use brown field sites including abandoned farm buildings. Do not build on wild or agricultural land.
14. B local food economy could be big tourist project
15. A Yes, B Yes
16. A Yes
17. No
18. Apply strictly the original 4th principle of the Park: that where there is a clash of interests, the biodiversity must come first
19. Ballater is in danger of loosing its ‘small village, conservation area’ identity

20. See 13 above, any building should blend with the style of the conservation area, and be carbon neutral.

21. A Yes B for Ballater protect view from Tullich Bridge south over village to Lochnagar

22. A yes, B see 20 above.

Ref 109 Name R J Searle

Response

In all the consultations I have responded to over the years I have emphasised that the essential foundations of the Park, and the only prospect for its future, rests absolutely on the priority given to conservation. Outcomes 1-4 express that collectively without success here we do not have a Park - and it is on these outcomes the rest depend. Cf: 'The CNP is unique and special etc ... ' opening para of 'Your View'.

Local Development Plan.

Main Issues : Eight Options.

As you know proposals for housing has caused uproar in Ballater, with a fear of an increase in holiday homes, locals priced out of the market, and no likelihood of employment opportunities to anchor young people here.

However, it is difficult to quarrel with any of these options, though this is a 'wish list' without any indication of how all these worthy aims are to be achieved in a period of great financial stringency.

I suggest 'Gaelic' is added to the first sub-heading of Option 8 'Cultural Heritage'.

Overhanging all development proposals in and around a National Park is a fear that if the nature and scale of these are not handled with great care, the very qualities embodied in it, and on which its attraction and support depends, will be undennined.

A statement of the obvious, perhaps. I offer a cautionary tale, about the English Lake District which I know well from my youth. The M6 motorway opened it up to the conurbations in the south and the quiet appeal of this National Park has suffered. All that I knew but an explanation from a former resident for moving up here shook me. She and her husband lived in Bowness-on-Windermere. very happily, until two more night-clubs opened making a total of three. They had become accustomed in the summer to announcements asking the public to avoid Bowness because 'it was full', but enhanced night-life and everything it brought with it was too much. The Bowness I knew is no more.

Ref 110 Name Perth & Kinross Council

Response

This report has been prepared to inform Members of the Draft Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012-2017 and the Cairngorms National Park Main Issues Report consultation, to highlight relevant content of these document and how they apply to Perth and Kinross Council area, and to agree to the proposed comments in response to the consultations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

- 1) note the publication of the Draft Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012-2017, and the Cairngorms National Park Main Issues Report and subsequent consultations
- 2) note the content of the Park Plan and Main Issues Report and their relevance to Perth and Kinross Council
- 3) agree to the proposed response to the consultations.

BACKGROUND

1. In accordance with the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000, the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) has prepared a Draft Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012-2017 for public consultation. This draft plan builds on the current National park plan 2007-2012.
2. The Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 also places a duty on the CNPA to prepare a Local Development Plan. The first stage of the plan preparation is the Main Issues Report (MIR) which sets out the Authority Vision, Spatial Strategy, Issues and Options for development.
3. This report has been prepared to bring to Members' attention the relevant parts of the Draft National Park Plan and the MIR and their application to areas that are the responsibility or concern of Perth and Kinross Council and to propose an appropriate response. The Draft Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012-2017 can be viewed online at <http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/resource/docs/publications/13092011/CNPA.Paper.1719.Draft%20Cairngorms%20National%20Park%20Plan%202012-2017.pdf> and the Main Issues Report at <http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/resource/docs/publications/19092011/CNPA.Paper.1731.MAIN%20ISSUES%20REPORT.pdf>. Copies are also available in the Members lounge.

MAIN ISSUES REPORT CONSULTATION

12. As indicated at the beginning of this report the MIR has been prepared as part of the Local Development Plan process. The MIR is a discussion document for consultation highlighting the main issues within the National Park area, and proposes sites and alternatives for land use.

Eight main issues have been identified within the MIR:

- 1 - Maintaining the special qualities of the Park.
- 2 - reducing resource consumption.
- 3 - support for communities.
- 4 - Housing/affordable housing
- 5 - Spatial Strategy
- 6 - support for the rural area
- 7 - connectivity and communications
- 8 - other policy issues – cultural heritage including archaeology, conservation areas and listed buildings, developer contributions, design, development standards, house extensions and alterations, replacement houses, conversions and building re-use, and provision for travelling people.

Proposed Response: Agree on the whole with the main issues identified within the MIR but would like to see more evidence on how the Draft National Park Plan 2012-2017 has informed the MIR at a strategic level. As previously mentioned in relation to the Park Plan, there is a concern with regards to the balance between conservation and economic growth. PKC would like to see more detail on how these issues would be addressed at a local level. The Council welcomes the need to provide a framework to encourage appropriate business growth and investment, and the protection of existing employment land sites in both Blair Atholl & Bruar. However, the policies need to be flexible enough to ensure other businesses located outwith these locations can expand appropriately when required. Under other policies, reference is made to cultural heritage however we need to seek additional information on how guidance on the built heritage will be delivered through the MIR.

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

Housing/ Affordable Housing

13. Housing need and demand within the Park indicates a shortfall in provision of affordable housing and it is estimated that there is a need for approximately 26 affordable units per year.
14. The current approach by the CNPA in the adopted Local Plan (2010) seeks a contribution of 25 - 40% of new housing development of three or more houses to be affordable. For development of one or two units a financial contribution is sought.
15. The MIR provides 3 options to meet housing need in the communities:

Option 1 – the current approach

Limit new housing development to provide only that identified as required in the housing assessments. This will take into account those sites with permission, and focus new development opportunities on sites which are allocated in the existing adopted Local Plan. On those sites CNPA would require a proportion of between 25-40% affordable units.

Proposed Response: Developments are not likely to be viable at a 40% contribution given higher building costs in rural areas.

Option 2

Focus all new development in the provision of affordable housing by only identifying sites for 100% affordable housing (bearing in mind the existing consent).

Proposed Response: We would question where finance would be available to implement this.

□

Option 3 – Preferred Option

Support the needs of communities by ensuring all main and other settlements have some options for future development. Focus new housing on those sites already adopted in Local Plans. On these sites require a benchmark of 25% affordable development (bearing in mind existing consents)

Proposed Response: We would support the preferred option as it would be in line with Perth and Kinross Council's own current Affordable Housing Policy.

Settlement Strategies

16. The policy approach of the CNPA is to retain existing settlement strategies by supporting greater growth in the main settlements and support growth to meet community needs in other settlements. Blair Atholl, Bruar and Pitagowan and Killicrankie have been identified as 'other' settlements within the MIR. The following strategies have been identified for these settlements:

Blair Atholl

17. Through pre-MIR consultation the CNPA identified that the community was keen to maintain its traditional character but recognised the need for growth in terms of housing, job opportunities and strengthen the trade sector including the service and tourism sectors.

18. Whilst reference is made to the existing housing sites in the adopted Highland Area Local plan 2000 the issue of flooding on these sites has been identified as a constraint. Therefore an alternative site is identified for housing to the southeast of the settlement to provide short-term (0-5years) supply.

19. Two economic development sites have been identified which in fact are carried forward from the adopted Highland Area Local Plan 2000, one to the west of the village for industrial/business use and the other, the railway goods yard which is to be protected for its current use.

Two options are given for the settlement strategy for Blair Atholl:

Option 1 – Preferred Option

- include the site to the southeast of the village to provide opportunities for housing
- use the land identified in current Local Plan to provide opportunities for economic growth

Option 2 – Alternative Option

- retain the sites included in current Local Plan to provide opportunities for housing
- use the land identified in the current Local plan to provide opportunities for economic growth
- identify no new land

Proposed Response: Given that the existing sites have proved ineffective due to flooding constraints PKC would support preferred Option 1 to provide opportunities for future development, with the retention of the business land/employment land to the west of the village and the rail freight goods yard as an opportunity use. However we would recommend CNPA seeks advice from Network Rail on the whether the site is required for its current purpose or whether there would be opportunity to allow other business land or mixed use on the site. It is noted that the Draft National Park Plan seeks to continue to promote tourism within Blair Atholl however no provision is made for the development of further tourism use within the settlement. We would propose that either the site designated for employment/business land could also allow opportunities for tourism development, or an alternative site is sought. Blair Atholl has a conservation area which needs to be indicated within the proposed plan and relevant policy provision made in terms of the protection and enhancement of this designation.

Bruar and Pitagowan

20. The MIR recognises the importance of House of Bruar in terms of direct employment and visitors to the area and associated expenditure impacts. The adopted Highland Area Local Plan 2000 identified the area as an opportunity for industrial, business and tourist uses and it is proposed to continue this support.

21. The option is given for development within the settlements as follows:

- use the land identified in the current Local Plan to provide opportunities for economic growth
- identify no additional land

Proposed Response: We would recommend expanding the existing opportunity designation to include the whole site for tourism/business use which encourage future tourism/business use.

Killiecrankie

22. Through pre-MIR consultation residents sought the need to enhance the provision of tourist facilities in the area, balancing the needs of residents. Of particular importance was local housing with a key priority for young people and families.

23. The Highland Area Local Plan 2000 identifies a site at Shiel Brae was identified for housing and it is proposed this will be used as a basis for future development opportunities. It is also proposed that the railway goods yard is retained for railway use as identified with the Highland Area Local Plan 2000.

24. One option is set out for development within the settlement as follows:

- use land identified in current Local Plan to provide opportunities for housing and economic growth
- identify no additional land

Proposed Response: It should be noted that the Perth and Kinross Local Development Plan Monitoring Report had identified that an application for 2 dwellings on the rail freight site has been allowed at appeal (Appeal reference P/PPA/340/551, PKC application 06/00945/OUT). Since the adoption of the Highland Area Local Plan 2000, Network Rail has sold the site and made a statement that it foresees no likelihood of railway need for the site. The Monitoring

Report should have been used as a Background Paper in the preparation of the CNPA MIR and therefore further investigation is recommended to assess whether the rail freight use should in fact be retained as proposed in the preferred option above.

CONCLUSION

32. The above report seeks to inform Members of the relevant content of the Draft Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012-2017 and the Cairngorms National Park Main Issues Report and seeks agreement on the proposed responses on issues, policies and settlement strategies relevant to Perth and Kinross Council. The contents of the Park Plan and the Main Issues Report are broadly compatible although some areas require further information or clarification - particularly in relation to the balance between conservation of the natural and built environment whilst encouraging sustainable economic growth.

Ref 111 Name Angus Council

Response

1 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-

1. Note that the Cairngorms Main Issues Report raises no significant issues for the land use planning in that part of Angus contained within the National Park; and
2. Agree that this report be submitted to the Cairngorms National Park Authority as a response to the consultation.
3. Note that opportunity will be available to comment on the new Local Development - Proposed Plan when this is published next year.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Development plan policy in Angus is currently provided by the Dundee and Angus Structure Plan (2002), the Angus Local Plan Review (2009) and the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan (2010). Members will recall that the northern part of Angus lies within the designated boundary of the Cairngorms National Park. These documents provide the current land use planning framework for the development and use of land, protection of the environment and guidance for making decisions on planning applications.

2.2 The Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) has been reviewing the existing local plan and as part of this process has prepared and published a Local Development Plan Main Issues Report (MIR). Consultation on the MIR extends until 9 December 2011. Published alongside this is a Monitoring Report, an interim Environmental Report of the Strategic Environmental Assessment, an interim Habitats Regulations Appraisal and an Equalities Impact Assessment and five Background Information papers covering the following topics:

Housing and Population; The Economy; Monitoring Report; Other Information; and Site Analysis.

2.3 The MIR is a key element of the new development planning system and is the main focus for engagement on the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan. The document sets out choices for the land allocations that could be made for development and for policies that the CNPA and its constituent authorities will use to make decisions on applications for planning permission.

2.4 It should also be noted that the CNPA has published a Draft Cairngorms National Park Plan and associated documents for consultation over the same period. The Draft Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012- 2017 sets out the vision, strategic objectives and a framework for managing the Park.

2.5 A copy of the Draft National Park Plan, MIR and supporting documents is available in the

Members' Lounge, The Cross, Forfar.

2.6 This report summarises the main thrust of the MIR and provides the basis for a response to the National Park Authority.

3 MAIN ISSUES REPORT

3.1 The draft Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012 -2017 sets out the vision, strategic objectives and the general approach to sustainable patterns of development growth, infrastructure and communications. The Vision is of 'an outstanding National Park enjoyed and valued by everyone, where nature and people thrive together'.

3.2 The National Park Plan identifies three strategic objectives as follows:

1. To ensure the Cairngorms National park is a special place where the natural and cultural heritage is conserved and enhanced.
2. To develop a sustainable economy that supports thriving and resilient business and communities.
3. To ensure the Cairngorms National Park delivers an outstanding visitor experience and is an international benchmark for sustainable tourism.

3.3 Taking the above into account, the MIR sets out the particular challenges faced by the Cairngorms National Park area under the following headings:

- Issue 1 Special Qualities of the Park;
- Issue 2- Resources/Reducing our Consumption;
- Issue 3 - Support for our Communities;
- Issue 4 - Housing/affordable Housing;
- Issue 5- Spatial Strategy;
- Main Settlements - An Camas Mar; Aviemore; Ballater; Grantown-on-Spey; Kingussie; and Newtonmore;
- Other Settlements- Blair Atholl; Boat of Garten; Braemar; Bruar and Pitagowan; Carr Bridge; Cromdale; Dalwhinnie; Dinnet; Dulnain Bridge; Killiecrankie; KInncraig; Nethy Bridge; Tomintoul;
- Issue 6- Support for our Rural Areas;
- Issue 7 Connectivity and Communications;
- Other issues- general topics to be carried forward from the current adopted plan;
- Supplementary guidance- setting out the topic areas for SPG.

3.4 With regard to the existing adopted Local Plan policy framework the MIR is suggesting that the following existing policy areas be taken forward into the Proposed Local Development Plan or supplementary Guidance associated with it:-

Cultural heritage Replacement houses

Developer contributions Conversion and reuse of existing traditional and vernacular buildings

Design Gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople

Development standards Tourism related development

House extensions and alterations

3.5 The existing adopted Local Plan also has a wide range of supplementary planning guidance; it is intended to revisit all existing guidance to ensure it provides best guidance to support the new Local Development Plan. Topics to be included as Supplementary Guidance are as follows:

Cultural Heritage

Housing

Water Resources

Use of resources

Sustainable Design

Natural heritage

Landscape

Sustainable Communities

Carbon Emissions

Developer Contributions

Developer Standards

Core Paths

3.6 For each issue the MIR sets out an introduction, current policy approach, options for change including that preferred by the CNPA. It is important to note that each issue cannot be seen in isolation; each has an impact on the other. For each of the policy and land development options presented there are a range of questions to which the public are requested to comment. A copy of the options and questions are attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

3.7 The MIR sets out the next steps and timescale for preparation and publication of the Proposed Plan which is scheduled for September 2012.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Not surprisingly the emphasis is on the MIR on the protection of the special qualities of the National park while seeking to enable sustainable development and economic growth. The bulk of new development- housing, economic, etc- will continue to be directed towards the main settlements (see paragraph 3.3 above) in the park where existing services and facilities exist. The MIR indicates the development options for each of the main settlements and the range of other identified settlements and the reasoning behind the preferred choice of site.

4.2 From the Angus perspective, Members will be aware that the area of the National Park within Angus is mostly upland area where forestry, farming, sporting estates, recreation and natural heritage are the main activities. Other than Clava village the population and settlement pattern is very dispersed.

4.3 Within an overarching context of continuing to focus on conservation and enhancement of designated nature conservation sites, habitat connectivity, wildness and landscape character the preferred approach for the Angus part of the CNP (and similar rural areas within the Park, is to 'support rural communities by providing for growth which matches historic growth patterns. Use the landscape character to protect these important rural areas from inappropriate development.' Such an approach would allow small scale development which supports diversification and other opportunities for sustainable economic development whilst respecting and protecting the natural and cultural heritage of the area. The existing Local Plan policy framework provides some flexibility in seeking to achieve the above and it will be for the new Proposed Plan to set out and clarify any changes to this framework.

4.4 The broad approach to land use planning in the Cairngorm National Park and that part within Angus is generally supported as being a pragmatic way of trying to tackle the balancing of protecting the intrinsic qualities which make the area attractive and special while seeking to allow for social and economic development in a sustainable manner. The MIR seeks a response to options and questions developed around the main issues. The Head of Planning & Transport is supportive of the preferred approach set out in the MIR to the topics covered by questions 1 - 5 and 25 - 28; it is however considered inappropriate to comment on the spatial development options/preferred option for development of main and other settlements outwith Angus, the communities covered by questions 6- 24.

11 CONCLUSION

11 .1 The preparation of the Main Issues Report is a key stage in the new development planning process and will afford opportunity for public engagement in the land use planning options for policy development in Cairngorms National Park area.

Ref 112 Name Christopher Carter

Response

Rather than make specific comments on detailed issues raised in the 'Main Issues Report' I would like to make some general comments about the overall focus and strategy of Planning activity in the National Park. I attended both the 'Big Conversation' meeting on 25th June 2011 to discuss the outcome of the Village Survey in Boat of Garten and the National Park Plan Review Consultation meeting in Boat of Garten on 25th October. To some extent the discussions at both meetings were helpful in encouraging local residents to get engaged in the planning process and to have their say about what they see as the priorities for action. However, I came away from both meetings asking myself what the main purposes of national parks actually are (or should be), and whether the issues that are being given priority in the Cairngorms National Park, are either right, or in tune with what a national park, and this national park in particular, should be all about?

I have visited over 50 national parks and national monuments in the USA, and many others in Canada, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Australia, New Zealand, France, Spain and Italy. In all of these countries, national parks have been designated to ensure that areas of truly outstanding natural beauty can be protected on behalf of the nation as a whole, (and not just the locality), whilst at the same time encouraging people to visit these areas and facilitating their enjoyment of them. This requires establishing a difficult balance, especially in the most popular parks, between facilitating visitor enjoyment of what the parks have to offer, without destroying, or even significantly altering, what it was that made these areas so special in the first place. In the USA and Canada, in particular, a culture has been developed where the population at large really does recognise the national parks as being something very special, and accordingly, this means that people visit the national parks precisely because they are national parks and because they know they will have a different and better experience than they would in other scenic areas without such designation. It also means that when they visit the national parks, by and large, they respect certain rules, such as not taking any natural objects out of the parks, not leaving any litter, not feeding the animals and obeying the low speed limits on the scenic roads.

I fully accept that in several of the countries I have mentioned, circumstances are, or were, very different, insofar as the national parks were designated in areas that were largely unpopulated and for which it was possible to bring them entirely into government ownership. This made it more straightforward for the national parks to focus on the issues of protection of the natural environment and the facilitation of visitor enjoyment. In the UK, we are faced with multiple ownership of the land and multiple economic activities, such as farming, forestry, quarrying, mining, manufacturing, visitor attractions etc. on that land. Often some of these activities are in conflict not just with the main purposes of national parks, but also with each other.

When the Cairngorm National Park was designated, an opportunity was missed, in my opinion, to minimise the difficulties created by these factors, by overlooking the real purpose of a national park (ie a place of national importance and a park in a scenic area, for protection and for visitor enjoyment). As a result, the boundary was drawn too widely to include the several settlements in Badenoch, Strathspey and Royal Deeside, plus Laggan and Tomintoul. (Incidentally, I believe the communities which are focused on the settlements, were wrong in clamouring to be included within the park boundary, because, provided they were all excluded, they would all have benefitted just as much through their proximity to the park). The Cairngorm massif, stretching from the Insh Marshes to Glen Muick and from the Kincardine Hills to Glenshee would still have offered an area as large as any other national park in the UK and one which was more coherent in terms of its management issues. The only settlement, therefore, that should logically have been included within the park is Braemar, and, ironically, unless I'm mistaken, it was the only one to express misgivings at the outset about its inclusion.

By stretching the boundary much wider and including so many settlements, not only has the distinctive identity of the park area, as something really special, been diluted, but the Park Board has been faced with planning problems which should be the responsibility of local planning authorities rather than a national park. As a result, in the consultation meetings, much of the discussion has centred on affordable housing, employment issues such as business viability, and on transport and communications issues, rather than on what a national park should be focussing upon. To me, this seems to be causing this particular national park to get bogged down in issues which should not be its concern, rather than focussing on how the UK's largest upland mass, which is of great national importance, can be protected, but at the same time can also be developed in sympathetic ways that will encourage visitors to come to the area and to enjoy it, particularly through recreational pursuits which are appropriate to the local environment.

The Cairngorms National Park should be perceived externally as something really special and different because it carries the 'National Park' designation. At present, I'm not sure how that perception is being recognised any more than it would have been had it not become a national park, apart from the road signs and the publicity material carrying the National Park logo and title. Interestingly, as far as I can see from the Park's website, few if any of the illustrations actually depict the settlements. Instead, they are almost all of the mountains, the wild open spaces, the forests, the lochs, the rivers, the wildlife and the facilities for recreational enjoyment. This is as it should be, but it does not reflect the amount of time, and presumably money, that the Board has to spend on dealing with issues in the settlements.

The setting of the park boundary as far west as Laggan and the subsequent extension of the boundary south to include the North Perthshire Hills and Blair Atholl, has only served to dilute further the image and identity of the national park. This is not denying that these areas are scenically attractive, but they are not part of the Cairngorms, and if conservation was required in them, this could have been adequately achieved through legislation other than that of national park designation.

Having said all of this, I do of course acknowledge that the boundary is set and that the National Park Board has to work with that, and to address the problems that arise within it, including those which are most pressing in and around the settlements. But this does not mean that sight should be lost of the main purpose of a national park when it is addressing the problems of its settlements. For example there is little doubt that the provision of affordable housing in some or most of the settlements is a high priority, but it is surely completely illogical that, in a national park, where inappropriate development should be prevented, a settlement must have 70- 80 houses built, in order to get the 20 affordable houses it actually needs. Clearly, at present, private developers consider it only feasible financially to provide affordable housing, if they can also build a much larger number of houses to be sold at market value. This is completely inappropriate in a national park. A way must be found to provide just the housing (either for sale or for rent) which is actually needed, without having to give way to the greed of large scale developers.

This problem is then greatly exacerbated by the fact that when affordable housing is provided, the local community has little or no control over the letting policy. As a result there is no guarantee that the housing will be allocated to the local people who actually need it. Thus a community could find that, in addition to the 20 houses it needs, it must have 50- 60 other houses built that it doesn't need, and even then the initial problem is not fully resolved. Indeed it may actually be made worse by the allocation of some existing affordable housing stock to tenants from outwith the national park, who happen to have more points on the housing list than

people who have jobs within it. In the national park, in particular, there should be a policy which ensures that, whilst a very small number of market value houses might be permitted, affordable housing should only be let or sold either to existing residents of the park (with priority to local residents) or to people who are moving into the park because they have work within it.

In this context, the recent decision (on 11th November) to refuse the planning application to build 77

houses in Boat of Garten woods was entirely correct. Although the village does need some affordable housing, it does not need a total of 77 houses to be built, especially in the wooded area proposed, given its recreational value to local residents and its population of capercaillie, which has been more in evidence again in recent years. At the consultation meeting in October, there was in circulation, a sheet on which some other possible sites for smaller scale housing developments were identified. With the exception of one, these sites are all preferable to the one for which the application was refused. The exception is the site which would be an extension of the existing development at Strathspey Park, in the corner behind houses fronting on to Deshar Road and Kinchurdy Road. The prospect of additional traffic emerging on to Deshar Road at a point where there are often parked and turning vehicles at the post office or in front of the former Public Hall (which hopefully will soon be refurbished for very welcome new uses) would not be safe.

In view of what I have said above, I find it difficult to see where the demand for a development on the scale of that proposed at An Camus Mar is coming from. How much housing is actually needed locally and where are the people going to work? Has there got to be about 1,500 new houses built in the national park, in order to meet Aviemore's much smaller need for affordable accommodation? Such a large development seems very inappropriate for a national park and there must be considerable concern about the amount of traffic it will generate travelling in both directions along the narrow and twisty B970 Coylumbrudge to Nethybridge road. This is likely to make that road much less pleasant and even dangerous to drive or cycle upon. Isn't that contrary to the purposes of a national park and doesn't it prevent the emergence of a culture that recognises national parks as being somewhere special and better for the enjoyment of the great outdoors?

I am aware that among my circle of local friends, most of whom are outdoor enthusiasts and who travel extensively visiting national parks in other countries, these views are widely shared even though they may not take the time to write accordingly.

Ref 113 Name Neil Williams

Response

I own a small croft on the outskirts of Ballater called Glascorrie. It is too small to be a viable agricultural unit as a stand alone. I am therefore looking for further options in order to make it capable of providing a living wage for at least one person. At a recent meeting of the Cairngorm National Park about the new Park Development Plan it was clear there was a lot of frustration in the community because of the lack of available land for any kind of development in this area as it is nearly all controlled by big estates.

I am therefore applying for Glascorrie to be zoned for development in the next Development Plan in order that I can take advantage of any opportunity that might arise which may also create employment opportunities in upper Deeside which is something our area desperately needs.

Ref 114 Name Laggan Community Association

Response

The opinions gathered by Laggan Community Association on the national and local development plan and are as follows: -

- no planning condition should inhibit the building of houses for local families, this is especially important now given the recommendation over section 75 from the Scottish Parliament.
- no areas should be zoned for housing developments
- no zoning at all
- the placement of houses already present should be maintained ie dispersed settlements
- 1 and 1/2 storeys should be redefined and not a prerequisite of planning permission.
- importance placed on retention of all amenities ie shop, school, doctors
- essential need of public transport provision
- need for help for small business
- bias towards business and groups with funding from CNPA should be avoided, especially within the 'statement' for Living in Laggan. Why? For example does Wolftax have a mention when the pottery coffee shop which welcomed 18,000 visitors alone this year, doesn't? There are several well establish business in the area who ALL contribute to making Laggan a special place to visit none should be singled out.

We would like to note that the slow, unreliable broadband connection and lack of any internet connection to some properties has made the filling out of the online survey impossible. This is a huge oversight and increases the chance of bias towards other communities who are able to respond this way.

We should like to have noted that lack of response online from Laggan should not be misconstrued as lack of interest, we would draw your attention to the meeting held in Newtonmore 5/10/11 when Laggan was very well represented and made up half the group formed.
