

AGENDA ITEM 5

APPENDIX 3

EXTRACT FROM DPEA REPORT

Appendix 3

Extract from DPEA Report on Examination of Proposed Cairngorms Local Development Plan, 08 September 2014 text on Carr-Bridge H1 and H2, pages 379-381. The paragraphs have been numbered in this appendix for ease of reference.

CARR-BRIDGE H1 & H2

1. The H1 site is a broadly triangular area of land, immediately to the south of Carr Road on the eastern fringe of the built-up area of Carr-Bridge. It comprises two distinct parts. The northern section is principally flat open fields fronting onto Carr Road, whilst the slightly larger southern and extreme eastern portion of the site is dense woodland, known as the Carr Plantation that forms part of Drochan Wood. This woodland in turn is part of a much larger forested area that extends further south-westwards to site H2 and southwards in the direction of Boat of Garten.
2. The western boundary of H1 is defined by a branch of Carr Road that leads southwards as a track through Carr Plantation and the rest of Drochan Wood. This signposted and widely marketed route forms part of a well used, longer distance path and cycle way linking Carr-Bridge with Boat of Garten and Aviemore.
3. Site H2 is located on the southern edge of the built-up area of Carr-Bridge, adjoining the B9153 road and opposite the Landmark Adventure Park, which marks the southern edge of the village. The H2 site, which is significantly smaller than H1, is relatively poor quality, undeveloped land which is interspersed with trees and other vegetation. It is located immediately to the south and east of established housing – the nearest dwellings being along the cul-de-sacs known as Crannich Park and Braeval.
4. The park authority's proposed allocations H1 and H2 are essentially carried forward from the adopted local plan. They are also broadly consistent with the site boundaries of an outline planning permission granted on appeal in 2005. I note, however, that this permission has since lapsed, so is no longer implementable. The H1 and H2 allocations shown in the proposed plan incorporate minor site boundary alterations to reflect what the park authority now considers to be the areas that are suitable for housing development. Accordingly they exclude some areas of woodland and open space identified by the planning authority as now being in need of safeguarding from development.
5. I note that the park authority is in receipt of a current planning application that seeks to develop, firstly, market housing on land that broadly equates to site H1 and secondly affordable housing on a land parcel that corresponds generally with site H2. That application, lodged in 2013, is still to be determined. In summary, the park authority has recently confirmed that there are no "live" planning permissions in place for any of the land covered by either the H1 or H2 sites as defined in the proposed plan.

6. Whilst acknowledging the local representations objecting to the plan allocations H1 and H2, the park authority argues that some development of open market and affordable housing is merited at Carr-Bridge. It also contends that the scale of growth envisaged by the proposed H1 and H2 allocations would be appropriate for the plan period. In principle, I am in agreement with the park authority's assessment with regard to site H2 but I have some significant concerns regarding the proposed allocation of the woodland part of the H1 site. Subject to the same important qualification, I broadly share the park authority's belief that the H1 and H2 sites are the most appropriate general locations to achieve planned growth in a manner that is sustainable and without undermining the special qualities of the village or the aims of the national park.
7. Whilst noting the concerns expressed in representations relating to H2, I agree with the park authority that this provides a logical southern extension to the built-up area of Carr-Bridge. Indeed I am satisfied that this can be achieved in a manner that would not be unacceptably intrusive in landscape and visual amenity terms, whilst providing an opportunity to provide a new defensible edge to the settlement that would safeguard against further major extensions eastwards or southwards. The northern, open part of H1 is also well located and suitable to provide a limited amount of new housing development. It is not readily visible from most vantage points and is situated opposite existing houses to the north - and has easy access to the village centre along Carr Road. The existing mature Carr Plantation woodland provides an excellent southern and eastern edge to that open northern part of the site, which defines and contains it. Accordingly, if development was limited accordingly, with a corresponding realignment of the settlement boundary, I conclude that this would represent a defensible boundary to safeguard against further, unwarranted development in this location.
8. In summary, my sole disagreement with the park authority's assessment of site H1 is in respect of the woodland part of its proposed designation. Having had regard to the representations lodged and my own site visit I am very concerned that implementation of the park authority's proposed H1 site in its entirety would result in major intrusion into the Carr Plantation woodland that cannot be justified – and indeed would be unacceptable in landscape and amenity terms. The proposed plan text accompanying allocations H1 and H2 sets out specific requirements, including design criteria, to be met by any development proposal here. Nevertheless, given the resulting loss of woodland adjoining the established long-distance walking and cycle route, I am not satisfied that the H1 site, as proposed by the park authority, would meet the stated aims. In particular, I conclude that the H1 proposal, as proposed, because of its woodland element would not ensure that the impacts on the character, amenity and future prosperity of the village and its setting would be safeguarded - having regard to the needs and aspirations of local resident community and tourist visitors.
9. Based on all the available evidence, including my site visit, for the reasons outlined above I conclude that the H1 allocation should be restricted to only the non-woodland northern part. Accordingly, I also conclude that the remainder – comprising the whole of the woodland element of the H1 proposal put forward by the park authority- should be excluded from the allocation when the plan is adopted. Indeed I would also seek the

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Planning Committee Agenda Item 5 Appendix 3

21 November 2014

whole Carr Plantation woodland to be defined as being outwith an amended settlement boundary that would follow the northern edge of that woodland.

10. For the reasons set out above, I also conclude that, on balance, there is insufficient reason to delete or amend the H2 allocation proposed by the park authority. Similarly, I find that there is no justification to amend the settlement boundary from that proposed by the park authority in the vicinity of site H2. Prior to reaching these conclusions, I have taken into account all of the representations lodged.