

Agenda Item 5

Appendix 4

2023/0245/DET

Representations - objections

Comments for Planning Application 2023/0245/DET

Application Summary

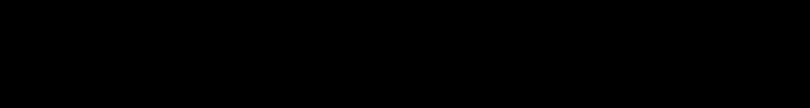
Application Number: 2023/0245/DET

Address: Land 85M North Of Birchview Dalwhinnie

Proposal: Formation of touring motorhome / caravan site

Case Officer: Emma Bryce

Customer Details



Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: Comments: I object to this proposal of a caravan/motorhome park within the village of Dalwhinnie.

Having been a frequent visitor to the area over the years and enjoyed the undisturbed natural beauty of the village and its surrounding areas, I find it disheartening that a developer wishes to build such a site which will destroy the beauty and tranquility of the village and also the natural habitat of so many species of animals. On my frequent visits to the area I have personally witnessed a wide variety of birds on this site as well as other animals e.g.: bats, red squirrels and snakes. I am also deeply concerned of the potential increase in flooding risk associated with such a development. This area is already widely known as at a medium to high risk of flooding and removal of natural vegetation and mature trees from this location and adding in areas of hard standing, in my opinion is going to increase the flooding risk even further which will place those staying over night at the site and/ or local residents' properties at risk.

I would also be extremely concerned at the light pollution that this development will inevitably bring with additional street lighting, lighting from the caravans and vehicles.

Dalwhinnie, and in particular the location of this proposed development, is a fantastic location for star gazing because of its naturally dark skies. This development will ruin the possibilities in watching the skies in an unpolluted light.

I strongly feel that any enjoyment of the village which I would experience on my next visit is going to be marred by a large amount of overnight travellers, whose vans are going to cause a lot of noise and air pollution to the locale and this will also out number the current residents of the village by almost doubling the daily population. The natural habitat of the local wildlife and the tranquility of the village will be irreversibly lost should this development be granted permission.

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Customer Details

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: I have been holidaying every summer in the Scottish Western Isles for the last fifteen years, and have used Dalwhinnie as a stopover point in my journey each year.

As a keen walker and outdoors enthusiast, I loved walking through the very same forest which I can see from the documents will be pretty much decimated by the caravan park. I won't even be able to walk through the route from the railway bridge to the rest of the village next time I stop in Dalwhinnie, looks to me like the caravan park will split the meadow and trees in two and restrict access for walkers.

There was so much nature and wildlife in this spot (chuffed I saw a red squirrel here last year), it was a great dose of calm and peacefulness every time I visited. I guess this area is now going to be full of motorhomes and people and litter, not what this lovely village deserves.

I can't help feeling the adventurer types this application wants to attract aren't going to be staying in a caravan park, and there's very little to draw families or other sorts of holidaymakers to such a small village. I picture this development having noisy and rowdy holidaymakers, and the staff struggling to keep all the people in these caravans from staying in the fenced compound. Otherwise the inevitable noise, trampling footfall, litter and fire risks are going to swamp the area and ruin the village for everyone who stays there.

I'd be sad to see this haven of natural wildlife ripped up like this, if the site gets built and the business venture fails, who would be officially responsible for removing the derelict site and converting it back to the way it was before, would the wildlife pushed out of this habitat ever come back?

I'll keep an eye on this planning application so when I am allowed to holiday in Scotland again, I can decide whether to change my stopping point of choice to somewhere more unspoilt.

I am not in favour of this proposal

Comments for Planning Application 2023/0245/DET

Application Summary

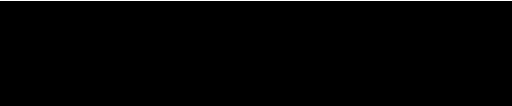
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Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: I frequently stay in and travel through Dalwhinnie. I was very upset to see that this planning application has been brought up again despite all the problems with the previous application. As far as I can see there has been no modifications to the plan.

Therefore I would like to object on the following grounds:

- development is applying to build on ground that is out with the current local plan and building on the land in the centre of the village (within a short distance of most homes in the village) and will change the village feel considerably to its detriment.
- the land is birch woodland which houses considerable wildlife. I have seen wading birds, lizards, frogs and red squirrels there and the rabbit population provides food for carnivorous mammals. (I suspect a wildcat hunts here).
- light and noise pollution.
- dangerous road access from the new A9.
- the land floods and the building of this development could cause danger to caravanners in a flood and affect local houses due to the bund mentioned on the plan.
- increased risk of wildfire. We have all seen the fires in Cannich etc. this summer; building this here is likely to lead to the same in Dalwhinnie.

I would also like to point out how difficult it is to work out what exactly is being planned. There is considerable difference between some of the documents put in by the developer (e.g. limit of development, bunds, etc.). However none of what is suggested would be good for the area and would cause considerable damage to wild land and thus I am objecting.

Comments for Planning Application 2023/0245/DET

Application Summary

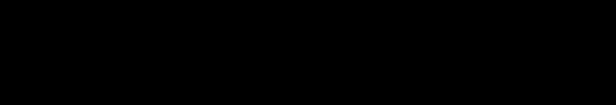
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Customer Details



Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: My parents live at Birchview in Dalwhinnie and are elderly and vulnerable. The proposed development will have a very significant impact on them as the development will surround two sides of their property and on the third side is a proposed emergency access track, which we would expect guests to use as a right of way to Loch Ericht. The plans extend right up to BirchView with an embankment and soakaways just yards from their fence.

There are many concerning aspects to this development but I would agree that it should be rejected on following grounds:

- Noise (particularly at night) from over 50 caravan pitches, which has the potential to occur 24 hours a day.
- Light pollution
- Loss of privacy primarily due to people walking past BirchView's front window to gain access to Loch Ericht using the proposed emergency access track, and from the close proximity of some pitches to the Birch View boundary fence.
- Fire risk due to the use of bottled gas and barbecues - Birchview is a timber property. The entire area is continuous woodland and scrub cover.
- Drainage, water, electricity and broadband impacts - currently Dalwhinnie's services are intermittent and are unlikely to cope with such a large development.
- Increased flooding risk to my parents' property due to loss of woodland floodplain, runoff from the roads/pitches, and all soakaways from the site being directed into the boundaries of Birch View.
- Impact on local wildlife: curlew, tawny owl, pine martens, red squirrel, newts, toads, common lizards, slow worms and adders are regular visitors to Birch View.
- Loss of mature woodland
- Litter escaping into the local environment

- Increased traffic being a danger to pedestrians

This proposal should be rejected as the loss of pristine mature woodland would be catastrophic for the local wildlife. In addition, such a large development is out of keeping with such a small village and the services it can offer.

Emma Greenlees

From: Emma Bryce
Sent: 28 June 2023 12:14
To: Planning
Subject: FW: Fire risk issues - Planning application 2023/0245/DET

Categories: Emma G, Comments

A rep for filing on 2023/0245/DET,

Thanks so much 😊

Emma Bryce (she/her)
Planning Manager (Development Management)

T: 01479 870 564
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Usual working hours: Monday to Thursday



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Read our plan for the future: cairngorms.co.uk/PartnershipPlan

Sent: Saturday, June 24, 2023 11:11 PM
To: Emma Bryce <emmabryce@cairngorms.co.uk>
Subject: Fire risk issues - Planning application 2023/0245/DET

Dear Miss Bryce,

I had previously written some objections to a planning application for the formation of a touring motorhome /caravan site, Land 85m North of BirchView, Dalwhinnie, in which I mentioned fire risk to my parent's property (Birch View) as one of my objections.

I write to expand upon my concerns regarding the risk of fire on the proposed site and the risk to surrounding properties upon an outbreak of fire. I have serious concerns regarding the lack of a fire risk assessment for the proposed property. Although there is no legal requirement for the applicant to produce such as fire risk assessment prior to the occupation of the site, I would like to outline some reasons below as to why I feel that a full fire risk assessment, in conjunction with consultation with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Services, should be undertaken as part of the planning process for this particular proposed development.

I believe the nature of the proposed site would require specialist advice from Scottish Fire and Rescue Services as the site has a number of very high risk factors that should be professionally assessed. These include the fact that the area of the proposed development includes dense highly combustible vegetation and trees, and is surrounded by several properties (some of timber construction such as those on Birch View property) with substantial timber boundary fencing. Within this area the applicant proposes to park more than 50 densely packed vehicles – vehicle fires are a leading cause of domestic fires - with the additional potential risk factors of holidaymakers using barbecues, gas stoves/LPG gas cooking equipment, smoking, and the “campfire area” mentioned in the proposed plans. To compound the risk further, the entrance/exit for the proposed site for both normal and emergency traffic is directed through a fuel filling station. It should also be noted that the proposed site is rural, with local fire services being a substantial distance away (Kingussie or Pitlochry) with a minimum response time of 30 minutes for fire services to arrive on site. As the proposed site is outdoors, fire warning systems would be reliant on the fire being visible and a vigilant/responsible person raising the alarm in good time to allow a full evacuation – this may not necessarily happen in such a rural unpopulated area or at night with occupants asleep.

In the specific points below that are causing me the greatest concern, I refer to legislation as set out in the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Fire Safety Scotland Regulations 2006. The pertinent information is also summarised in a document produced by Scottish Fire and Rescue Services entitled “Advice for Caravan and Mobile Home Park Operators”, which can be found at:

https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/media/1004171/caravan_mobile_home_guidance_website_release_sept_16.pdf

1) The proposed area has continuous ground cover of dense combustible material such very dense scrubland with shrubs and low growing bushes but also has dense wooded areas where the tree canopy overlaps with that of surrounding properties. Even with very regular groundskeeping /maintenance, this is a high residual risk that cannot be ignored. The guidance states that “Grass and other vegetation should be cut at frequent intervals to prevent them becoming a fire hazard. Clippings should be removed and be disposed of safely.”. Groundskeeping as a safety feature has not been mentioned in the plans. This requirement may pose additional ecological impacts given the nature of the site. An additional guidance point is that “The use of barbecue facilities should be strictly controlled and ideally restricted to purpose designed areas within the site remote from units.”

2) Several of the pitches do not appear to have the legally required 6m separation distance between caravan/motorhome standings.

3) The regulations state that “The distance from any part of the caravan/mobile home to any site road should be not less than 2 metres and not less than 3 metres from any site boundary”. These plans do not meet this requirement.

4) The hardcore tracks to the pitches are not consistent with the requirements for fire appliance access which according to the SFRS advice should be “roadways provided and intended for fire service access should be capable of supporting the weight of a 14 tonne fire appliance and be adequately maintained. Any gateways should be a minimum of 3.5 m wide and 3.7m high”. The “emergency access track” at the back of the proposed site and between Birch View and the Railway line through the field would not be compliant with this guidance.

5) The proposed plans do have a fire hydrant which is located by the main road between the petrol station and the Loch Ericht hotel opposite. If the hydrant is for the protection of caravan standings, the regulations state it should be within 100m of the furthest standing. In the proposed plans, the hydrant is approximately 200m from the furthest caravan standing, leaving many of the furthest caravan plots unprotected.

6) Dalwhinnie village has suffered from poor water pressure for many years, and even with some recent improvements by Scottish Water this continues to be the case. This would render the fire hydrant mentioned above unsuitable for the fire and rescue services. The regulations state that where poor water flow and pressure are present, “a water charging tank of not less than 45,000L should be available to the fire services”, but this does not seem to appear on the proposed plans. Alternative suggested water sources would include “any pool/pond/lake etc within 100m of the site and holding not less than 45,000L of water at all times of year, with an adjacent hard standing” suitable to park a fire appliance. Again, I cannot see any such feature on the proposed plans. Any hydrant needs to be adjacent to a parking space large enough for a fire appliance, which I do not see on the plans.

7) Although there are additional fire points dotted around the site on the proposed plans, the water pressure does not meet the required standard of 30L/minute therefore these fire points could not be hose reels as the low water pressure would render the extinguishing range would too short to be effective. The legislation does state a suitable alternative would be 2 x 9L fire extinguishers at each fire point, but this would only provide a short duration in which to tackle a fire – typically a 9L water fire extinguisher discharges in 55 seconds. Since the ground vegetation mentioned in point 1 above would be a contributory factor in fire spreading, the provision of a water standpipe and hose would be the preferred option.

8) Looking at the design and plan for the proposed site, the site boundaries comprise existing high timber fencing surrounding Birchview, bunding which features on the proposed site plan and a steep embankment and fence where the proposed site meets the railway line. In the proposals the whole sites is enclosed by a 1.8m fence. I am concerned that the existing proposed plans show only one direction of escape from fire – towards the main road and the entrance/exit through the petrol station. In the event of a vegetation fire in dry conditions, which could spread rapidly, there is a possibility of becoming trapped at the back of the site by the railway line as the fire spreads. Any emergency evacuation plan would need to take into account the need to have proper traffic management systems to separate escaping pedestrians from incoming emergency vehicles. In the proposed pans, I cannot identify a safe and suitable assembly point that is not immediately adjacent to a busy 40mph main road, blocking access for emergency services to the site, or within the fuel filling station itself (which is in itself an explosion hazard if a fire occurs).

9) The proposed site is on the floodplain of the Truim river. Should there be an outbreak of fire, there is a legal requirement to contain any waste firefighting water which may contain toxic chemicals such as firefighting foam agents and corrosive or toxic by-products of combustion and prevent accidental release into local waterways. Careful consideration should be made to prevent direct runoff into watercourses or onto ground, which may contaminate groundwaters. Consideration must also be made to prevent firefighting waste waters from entering the foul water (storm) drainage system as untreated waste, which would affect the performance of the water treatment works. This is set out in the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011. Firefighting foam agents are especially harmful to the aquatic environment, smothering oxygen from aquatic ecosystems and causing long term and irreparable damage. Some of the usual methods of containment would include creation of embankments, formation of artificial lagoons or provision of a designated holding tank with bunding to contain firefighting water until it can be removed for hazardous waste disposal. Given the ecological sensitivities of this site, a designated holding tank would be the only suitable option for firefighting waste water here, but there is no such structure shown on the proposed plan.

10) The guidance notes state that “No car parking area providing parking for more than 10 cars should be nearer than 18 metres from any part of a unit/caravan pitch. If car parks provide parking for 10 cars or fewer, then the minimum distance can be reduced to 10 metres”. This requirement is not being met by the proposed plans with parking of cars on the forecourt of the filling station and at the rear of the filling station.

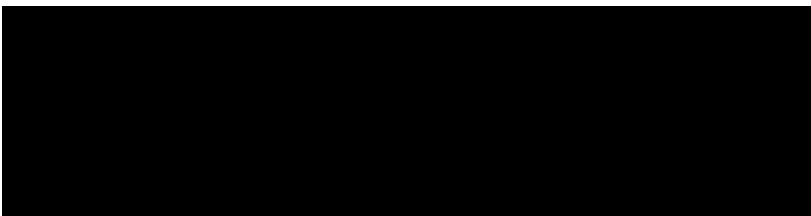
11) The guidance states that “A means of contacting the Fire and Rescue Service, at any time, should be available on the site”. Since the filling station is not manned 24 hours a day, and there is no mention of an emergency telephone within the plans, this requirement has not been met in these plans.

For this proposed site, the presence of a large fire loading (amount of highly combustible materials in the vicinity) greatly increases the risk of rapid fire spread within the site. With the additional risk factors outlined above, the foreseeable outcome could be a catastrophic fire with substantial loss of property and/or life. Ideally, this should be taken into account at a planning stage to allow for provision of structural or preventative groundskeeping work (fire breaks etc) to be implemented, hence my urgent request for a full fire risk assessment to be undertaken. I would urge that this should be drafted in conjunction with the Fire and Rescue Services as there are several structural elements of fire planning that have not been fully explored and also because the water pressure continues to be a problem and this would affect the suitability of the proposed on-site fire fighting measures. There is also a high probability that some of the recommendations in any such fire risk assessment may contradict those of the ecology reports, environmental health reports or any report from Scottish Water regarding the adequacy of the water supply and pressures to Dalwhinnie village.

As a final note, the guidance notes state that “A risk based approach should be applied where existing caravan pitches/units are located next to utilities such as electrical substations, sewage treatments works, bulk gas or oil storage tanks, water storage tanks, laundry or social facilities premises. It is envisaged that via the fire safety risk assessment process, a safe distance or any alternative arrangements can be put in place to ensure compliance.” I would suggest that this implies the requirement for a fire risk assessment to be conducted on this site proposal.

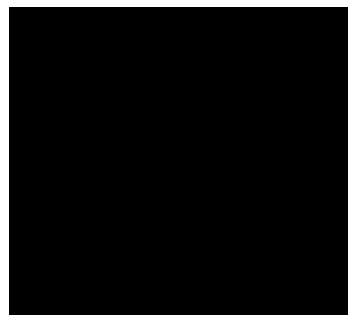
At present, several elements of the plan do not meet current regulatory fire standards and the proposed site plans would need substantial revisions in order to meet the regulations within the aforementioned act and the guidance notes produced by the SFRS. I would advocate that it would surely be beneficial for all concerned to have a robust debate focussing on the best ways to achieve an adequate fire safety management plan – both for members of the public and for local residents - and indeed whether this is fully achievable when taking into account the ecological sensitivities of the site.

Yours sincerely,



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 25 February 2024 09:43
To: Planning
Subject: 2023/0245/DET

Categories: DMS, Katherine



Ref :
Formation of touring motorhome / caravan site
Land 85M North Of Birchview Dalwhinnie

Dear Ms Donnachie,

I last wrote to CNPA regarding the above application on the 24th June 2023, and have reviewed the documentation uploaded onto the planning portal since that time. I now have several comments on them regarding: fire safety, foul water drainage, environmental reports, issues surrounding encroachment onto the land allocated in the LDP for housing and open space, and conditions of planning.

I understand that the CNPA is working very hard at the moment on the new Local Development Plan consultation, and the sheer volume of documents for this particular application is time consuming to sift through, so hopefully drawing attention to some discrepancies and omissions for this planning case might be helpful for yourselves.

Fire Safety

I previously wrote to CNPA on the 24th June 2023 to bring to your attention a number of issues with the above application where the application did not meet the current fire regulations for camping and caravan sites within the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and Fire Safety Scotland Regulations 2006. In my previous correspondence, I suggested that CNPA consult with S.F.R.S to examine my comments in more detail, and I am grateful to see that CNPA did seek advice from S.F.R.S. on the issues laid out.

With respect to their recent responses on the 14th February, I can see that they are advising that an alternative water supply tank of 5,000 litres of water must be made available within 60m of any building, with a hard standing and access adjacent for fire appliance access. This addresses and confirms points 6 and 7 in my original letter, regarding poor pressure. I note that they were happy

with the access arrangements, *but at this stage I would like to clarify whether this was with or without the “emergency exit track” to the west of Birch view and leading onto the unadopted track.*

In correspondence received from S.R.F.S. on the 11th January, they concede that they will only reply to comments regarding access and water supplies, which I have addressed above. I can see that S.F.R.S. refer CNPA to the same (updated in 2022) guidelines that were quoted in my original letter on the 24th June: 2018 Fire safety guidance for existing premises with sleeping accommodation, and especially Annex 3 “Holiday Camping and Caravan sites”. This can be found at:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/practical-fire-safety-guidance-existing-premises-sleeping-accommodation/pages/13/>

With respect to the S.F.R.S. advice that it is the responsibility of CNPA to decide whether the other issues raised in my letter meet the guidance, I wish to re-iterate that the remainder of my points are still valid and the proposed site does not meet current fire safety regulations.

- Ground cover of dense shrub material (not grass) and use of BBQ facilities in designated areas only. Although some documents from the agent do refer to regular ground maintenance, this would imply there is grass cover and that this could be easily cut/maintained. This is not the case on this site. Referring to the comments at the bottom of my original letter, the guidance notes state that “A risk based approach should be applied where existing caravan pitches/units are located next to utilities such as electrical substations, sewage treatments works, bulk gas or oil storage tanks, water storage tanks, laundry or social facilities premises. It is envisaged that via the fire safety risk assessment process, a safe distance or any alternative arrangements can be put in place to ensure compliance.” There has still not been a professional fire risk assessment survey conducted to assess the fire loading (risk of the combustible material in/around the site) and its suitability for use as a camping/caravan site with vehicles, LPG gas containers and BBQs.
- Several of the pitches on the west of the site do not have the legally required 6m separation distance. (Guidance also states there should be a minimum of 6m between any LPG bottles and the adjacent unit).
- Several of the pitches do not meet the requirements that distances from any of the caravan sites should not be more than 2m from the access road and 3m from the boundary of the property.
- In terms of access, I see that S.F.R.S. did confirm that they were happy with access, but as iterated above I would like to clarify that this does not include any reference to a rear emergency exit track to the unadopted track.
- The distance from the hydrant to the pitches at the west of the site is over 200m, and exceeds the legal maximum distance of 100m from a hydrant, rendering this site extremely dangerous. I see from the most recent plan, SA108 (Drainage plan, 4th Jan 2024) that this has still not been addressed.
- The poor water pressure in Dalwhinnie renders any such hydrant unusable, and therefore I can see that S.F.R.S. recommends a storage tank of min 5,000L within 60m of all pitches. Given the size of the site, more than one of these water storage tanks would be required to provide access within a 60m radius to all pitches, and this would need reflected on new plans. *It is also unclear whether connecting a campervan site to the water supply for a small village could put strain on the existing infrastructure. I note that the previous correspondence with Scottish Water on 8th June 2023 noted “the applicant should be aware that this does not confirm that the proposed development can currently be serviced”.*
- In terms of fire escape from the proposed site, enclosed by 2.4m fencing, there is still only one direction of escape in the event of a fire, namely towards the incoming emergency services

traffic, the main road and the petrol station. In the new 2022 regulations, 7.202 states “Escape should also be considered from external areas like enclosed yards.”

- There are still potentially severe ecological damage risks as the site has no firefighting water runoff containment tank – the site is close to the river. I note with interest that the Nature Scotland Habitat Regulations Appraisal report of the 20th February 2024 recommends that a Pollution Prevention Plan (PPP) is produced for construction and works due to the proximity to the Truim river and the potential risk to Atlantic Salmon and Freshwater Pearl Mussel. It is my view that to meet the regulations, a firefighting water runoff containment tank would be required for the same reason, as would some form of bunding round the chemical toilet waste disposal storage tank to prevent ecological damage and therefore this would require a separate PPP.
- There are still pitches within 18m of the car parking area where more than 10 cars could be parked - this is against the previous regulations, and although superseded by the newer 2022 version, they would still be taken as best practice industry working guidelines and should be adhered to.
- An emergency telephone would be required on site at all times. This is not on the current plans.

As per my original letter of the 24th June 2023 there are still significant issues outstanding whereby this application does not meet with the legal standards. Several major revisions to the plans would need to be made but even if these measures were put in place, this would still not address whether there was suitable means of escape for vehicles and pedestrians, and whether the site itself is unsuitable for this use due to the nature of the surrounding combustible vegetation and materials. I am also taking into account the remote location of the site, more than 30 minutes from the nearest stationed fire appliance, which would feature as a significant residual risk on any professional risk assessment of such a site. **Taking into account everything listed above regarding fire safety it would be both unsafe and unprecedented in Scotland to continue with an application for this type of development at this particular location.**

Foul water drainage

With reference to the letter from H.C. Flood Risk Management Team on the 31st January, the issue of foul drainage has still not been settled. “[Foul drainage is outwith the FRM Team’s remit. If not already consulted, the FRM Team recommends that SEPA is consulted on the latest proposals, with respect to foul drainage, chemical toilet disposal and the nearby waterbodies.](#)” I am concerned that there has been so little mention in any of the documentation of how chemical toilet waste is to be stored and disposed of. The Site Standards Document uploaded on the 4th January says “[A properly designed disposal point for the contents of chemical closets shall to be provided as per drawings. Disposal point to include an adequate supply of water for cleaning the containers. This water supply shall be clearly labelled as not suitable for drinking. The method of disposal shall be to the satisfaction of Highland Council and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency.](#)” On the SA108 Drainage plan provided on the 4th January, there is inadequate space allocated for an appropriately sized holding tank, although a (very small) chemical tank is indicated. As per my comments above, I believe a PPP and appropriate bunding for liquid chemicals should be provided for this, due to the proximity to the river Truim and the ecological sensitivities of the area. I am extremely puzzled how we have reached this stage of proceedings with this planning application for a touring motorhome/caravan site and the fundamental aspect of chemical waste disposal has yet to be addressed in the documentation provided by the applicant and agent. I assume further reports will need to be procured, but I would

draw your attention to the fact that I have previously mentioned that the foul drainage from this site could pose a serious flooding risk to the adjacent property of BirchView, in an area where there is significant surface water pooling after heavy rainfall, and that this should be formally assessed by a suitably qualified person, or the site would be in contravention of NPF4 planning guidelines.

NPF4 Policy 22: “Development proposals will not increase the risk of surface water flooding to others, or itself be at risk.”

I note that the Flood Team response on the 20th July 2023 notes that “A DIA, written by a competent and experienced engineer, in accordance with the Supplementary Guidance, as outlined above is required.” The submitted DIA document on the 4th January 2024 has been drawn up by Highland Rural Design, the applicant’s agent. The report is riddled with inaccuracies in terms of the position of the river Truim to the proposed development. I also refer you to section 4 where the applicant’s agent says “As the site lies on relatively flat higher ground raised above a flood plain there will be no surface water run-off.” This is quite an assumption to be asserting without evidence, and I know this to be completely untrue, after heavy rain there is surface runoff to the main road as well as to the land to the east and west of Birch View. Also, the Appendix diagram clearly shows an emergency exit track through the field to the west of Birch View, as if this were to be an emergency exit in the event of flooding on the site. I am surprised that the applicant’s agent has submitted this DIA, which is clearly a conflict of interest, would question whether the agent is a qualified and competent engineer to produce a DIA as required by the Flood Team?

Environmental reports

The Ecology report from 3rd August 2023 indicates that the development will have a large potential impact on protected mammals on the site. It also notes that the impact on breeding birds will be significant and that the wading bird assessment was inadequate and will need repeated. It also concludes that a number of Scottish Biodiversity List species will be affected on the site and that a number of preconstruction surveys would be required to assess the level of impact. A number of mitigation strategies would need to be applied for light pollution/pollution to aquatic habitats to reduce the risk to an acceptable level, but these have not yet been presented. It also notes that “no measures specific (for environmental enhancement and promotion of ecological interest) have been highlighted by the applicant. The report notes that the applicant had detailed some measures within the Jan 2021 Habitat Survey and Assessment, namely

- Habitat Management Plan - detailing management measures for grazing which could be managed to enhance grasslands on site, benefiting a number of species.
- Tree planting (both compensation & enhancement - planting of trees to enhance the existing woodland - using native species already present in the area e.g. birch, rowan and hazel. For enhancement more trees should be planted than that felled for development.
- Habitat creation (not mentioned) but felled materials could be used to create habitat for insects and other species - see providing homes for nature in <https://www.nature.scot/doc/developing-nature-guidance>
- Installation of bird and bat boxes around the site could also enhance biodiversity - advice should be sought from experienced ecologist on suitable locations.

I would urge you to take into account that there has been no further elaboration on these vague plans for promotion of biodiversity since 2021. Also, the applicant has now felled between 50% and 70% of the original tree cover within the woodland since the application was originally submitted and has removed the felled material from the site. The submitted plans detailing tree planting will not nearly bring the number of trees back up to the original level of coverage.

Taking into account the paragraphs above, this is fairly substantive evidence that this application does not meet the NPF4 guidelines or the National Park's Local Development Plan criteria in terms of enhancing and protecting biodiversity. On this basis, any application for economic development should be contained within the site allocated for this purpose, and should not be allowed to extend into the protected open space woodland site or allocated housing site.

NPF4 Policy 3: "Development proposals will contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity. Development proposals for national or major development, or for development that requires an Environmental Impact Assessment will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, including nature networks so they are in a demonstrably better state than without intervention"

NPF4 Policy 4: "Development proposals which by virtue of type, location or scale will have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment, will not be supported.

NPF4 Policy 6: "Development proposals will not be supported where they will result in: adverse impacts on native woodlands, hedgerows and individual trees of high biodiversity value, or fragmenting or severing woodland habitats. Development proposals on sites which include an area of existing woodland... will only be supported where the enhancement and improvement of woodlands and the planting of new trees on the site (in accordance with the Forestry and Woodland Strategy) are integrated into the design."

NPF4 Policy 20: "Development proposals that result in fragmentation or net loss of existing blue and green infrastructure will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal would not result in or exacerbate a deficit in blue or green infrastructure provision, and the overall integrity of the network will be maintained."

I also wanted to note a few points of inaccuracy in the EIA screening opinion (18th July 2023).

In section 1.3 "Are there any areas on/around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources which could be affected by the project, e.g. forestry, agriculture, water/coastal, fisheries, minerals?" The assessment does not take into account that the site area is unspoilt natural deciduous woodland.

In section 3.2 "Will the project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation?" The given answer was "The nature and level of construction noise will be temporary and will not be excessive. Noise associated with the development will be no worse than the current commercial uses of the site". This is not accurate as the proposed caravan site will be in operation 24 hours a day with over 30 caravan bays and the associated noise and light pollution for surrounding houses and ecosystems, whereas the existing filling station is not operational at night, is on a much smaller scale and is further away from the many houses at this side of Dalwhinnie, Furthermore, much of the proposed development is on land not currently used for commercial purposes.

In sections 4.1 and 4.2, it is assumed that the development poses no risk of accidents or risk to the population, but with the filling station and the proximity to a woodland and wooden houses, there is an inherent serious fire risk that was not mentioned.

In section 5.1, the EIA assessment seems to indicate that no local surface waters might be affected by the project. I believe the proximity to Loch Ericht, the river Truim and the existing pond / drainage

ditches on the site was not taken into account. This is reinforced in the comments in the ecology report 3rd Aug 2023 and the PPP mentioned above.

In section 6, regarding biodiversity, when asked if there were any areas that could be affected by the project, the assessment notes “There is no obvious connectivity from the site to any watercourse” and “Given the distance of the development to the watercourse, disturbance of any protected species is unlikely.” There are ponds and drainage ditches on site, and CNPA would have been aware of the presence of species such as newts, toads, pine marten, squirrel and wading birds. Again, the ecology report above refutes this.

In section 7.1 “The site is within the settlement boundary and is allocated for Economic Development as defined by the adopted Local Development Plan. The proposed uses do not raise any significant environmental issues.” This application encroaches on open space/agricultural land, involves felling native woodland and potential for noise/light pollution for wildlife and local residents.

The original CNPA assessment concludes that an EIS is not required because the proposal is not likely to have significant effects on the environment. I believe that the results of the later ecology survey refute this information and that taking into consideration the inaccuracies noted above, **a full EIS is now required.**

-

Issues surrounding encroachment onto the land allocated in the LDP for housing

I see that CNPA are aware that the proposed development encroaches upon land allocated for housing in the 2021 CNPA Local Development Plan, but I would like to reinforce that the proposed development would incorporate all the current allocated housing land in Dalwhinnie. There have been recent cases (2023) of families who work in the area that cannot find housing in Dalwhinnie where they need to be based for work. Removing the only allocated site for further housing will further exacerbate the situation where permanent residents cannot find suitable, available and affordable housing which puts this small rural village with a fragile population at risk of depopulation and associated economic risks. The proposed development also encroaches on protected open land as it sprawls far beyond the boundary of the land allocated for economic development in the confines of the filling station.

In terms of the issue of this proposed development using all the available land allocated for housing on the most recent LDP, I would like to draw your attention to a couple of external documents. On the Highland Council Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028, the proposed Minimum All Tenure Housing Land Requirement for the region is 10,800 units. According to the Highland Council’s Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA), Highland Council area encompasses 10 geographic areas, and HC set the Housing Requirement for future time periods in each of the 9 regions, but not Badenoch and Strathspey - where CNPA set out the future housing requirement in their LDP. In the time period 2020-2029, Highland Council allocated 10,344 dwellings within the other 9 areas, which leaves a deficit of at least 456 homes, which should therefore be allocated within the Badenoch and Strathspey area. Looking at the CNPA Local Development Plan, for 2020-2024, Dalwhinnie has 6 of the 511 sites allocated for housing within the Badenoch and Strathspey region. In the timeframe 2025-2029, there are only an expected 418 sites allocated for new dwellings, so this situation will be even more acute as time passes. This is not likely to meet the projected need set out in the Highland Council HNDA, and losing a site with allocation for 6 homes in Dalwhinnie will remove over 1% of the anticipated supply. Looking at the Housing Supply Target within the 2021 LDP, the Highland area targets are 309 homes in 2020-2024 and 218 homes in 2025-2029, so the 6 in Dalwhinnie would represent nearly 3% of CNPA’s own targets. This is a large number of housing sites for an area that is struggling to

meet anticipated need. I see with anguish that for the effective supply of home sites post 2030 the vast majority of new housing allocations will be located at An Camas Mor near Aviemore with only 19 of the 1503 expected sites being located in the Dalwhinnie, Newtonmore and Laggan area. This is unacceptably low and will not support the demand for housing in this region, especially taking into account the need to house estate workers, workers at Wolftrax and Dalwhinnie Distillery and workers on the A9 dualling project. Removal of the 6 allocated housing sites in Dalwhinnie for the proposed planning application would have an irreversible impact on this fragile, very rural location. Quoting the 2021 LDP: "In order to support sustainable rural communities, it is important to plan for more housing in the park. This needs to be a realistic assumption of what can be delivered whilst ensuring a generous supply of land is available to ensure that new housing is delivered. Whilst most growth is focussed in major settlements, all communities should have some options for new housing."

The Highland Council HNDA also sets out that present "entry level" house prices in Badenoch and Strathspey are currently one of the highest in the Highland Council area, with only Skye and the three areas closest to Inverness being higher. This is unacceptable and has the potential to lead to younger people being priced out of the area with implications for population stability and issues pertaining to supplying medical and care services to the increasingly ageing population in Badenoch and Strathspey. Dalwhinnie has one of the lowest property prices in the region, so the 6 housing sites allocated in Dalwhinnie would have represented options for more affordable homes for those wishing to get a foot on the housing ladder.

There are several brownfield sites in Dalwhinnie village, which have been left empty and degraded once the itinerant industries that built them left without any decommissioning plans in place. These have left areas of the village as permanent eyesores, which the villagers have been left to remediate with support and help from Highland Council. Examples include: the site of the Beauly to Denny power line yard, the adjacent site which was formerly a derelict truckers café until the community managed to have the site demolished after more than 10 years of campaigning, and the site of the former Grampian hotel which is now reduced to a pile of rubble. There is also a defunct hotel which no longer offers visitor accommodation (the Loch Ericht Hotel), owned by the applicant, that could be brought back into use to support the local economy and tourism industry. It seems ridiculous to allow the building of yet another tourism related business in Dalwhinnie when so many previous ventures have failed or are lying empty and unused. There are alternative sites within Dalwhinnie where this proposed development could have been located that do not pose the same environmental and fire risks. The site of the demolished Grampian hotel and the site of the now disused Beauly to Denny workers yard are prime examples of alternative brownfield sites in the settlement envelope of Dalwhinnie with suitable access and services which do not encroach on allocated housing land or protected open space and where repurposing of these brownfield sites would be much more in keeping with the principles of NPF4.

The sheer size and scale of the development is not in keeping with the small village of Dalwhinnie where water and broadband services are struggling to support the existing residential population and where there are no other services such as a shop, playpark or recreational facilities. Had the proposed development been on a smaller scale (say 5-10 vehicles) and providing basic service amenities, then this would have been much less of a strain on the fragile ecosystem and services within the village and would have been more in keeping with the character, rural locality and size of the existing village. Planting a brownfield site with native woodland (providing the proposed development was on a small scale in keeping with the village), instead of decimating the village's only remaining stand of native

woodland, would improve the characteristics of the place and biodiversity whilst still providing small scale economic development benefits.

In terms of design, quality and place principles, this development does not meet the six criteria at all. The health of the local population will suffer due to the obvious potential for noise disturbance, fire risk and potential issues with site waste leading to an increase in the rat problems that have plagued this end of the village since the hotel closed. The development does not create pleasant natural and built spaces as it proposes to decimate the only remaining natural woodland area in the village. Although Dalwhinnie is too small to have a formal greenbelt, rural villages should be able to use the same policies to retain pockets of protected open space for their landscape amenity, health and environmental benefits. The development does not provide for camping/walker's use and therefore is increasing dependency on private vehicles without supporting our rural public transport networks in any way. A more sustainable future for the village would be to re-open the now defunct adjacent Loch Erich Hotel, which the applicant owns, which would provide several year-round jobs for locals, and retaining the land allocated for housing which would be necessary to allow the new employees to stay locally. The proposed development is also unsustainable in terms of preventing the building of affordable housing for local families who need housing now. We need to ensure a supply of housing is available for balanced and stable population. The ecological sustainability aspect of this proposed development, as outlined above, is catastrophic for local wildlife such as birds, amphibians and mammals. The development will clearly degrade local nature networks, blue/green habitats and fragment the existing woodland to the point where there can be no natural regrowth or regeneration on the site. There is no decommissioning plan for the site either, so the site is not adaptable, and the loss of the woodland would be permanent – if the development had been on a smaller scale, more of the existing woodland could have been maintained allowing for re-wilding of the site and restoration. There is also little chance of adapting such a large site for an alternative economic development purpose in such an isolated rural area. There are no electric car charging points shown on any of the plans to allow the site to adapt to an electric vehicle future. I note that the CNPA LDP 2021 states that [“The A9 has been designated an “electric highway” as part of the SG’s vision to phase out the need for new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2032. This is expected to result in the installation of electric vehicle charging hubs within communities along the A9 to provide charging options for long distance travellers as well as local businesses and residents”](#).

I would also like to note that the 2021 CNPA LDP Economic Development Policy 2 states that [“Proposals for tourist related accommodation other than dwellings built to residential standards, will be supported where they: have no adverse environmental or amenity impacts on the site or neighbouring areas; contribute to/support the provision of a wide range of visitor accommodation options including low cost accommodation; support or contribute to a year-round economy”](#). I have discussed environmental and amenity impacts on neighbours and the community extensively above, but I note also that this proposal is not year-round –villagers were under the impression that the site would only be open in the summer season (which was supported in a document submitted for the previous campervan park application, a Flood statement dated 04/02/21 compiled by the applicant's agent). It therefore does not meet 2 out of the 3 criteria for this particular policy.

I also draw attention to 5.14 within the LDP: [“Protected open spaces have been identified where they are important to the amenity, setting and overall fabric of settlements. These areas also provide locally important habitats or landscape features, or are important recreational resources within settlement. They will be protected from development. Many settlements also have networks of open](#)

spaces, paths and recreational spaces that are not specifically identified but will be material considerations in the determination of any planning applications that affect them.” The field and woodland around Birch View is the only remaining stand of deciduous woodland in the village boundary. It is pleasing to look at and all the documentation on this application acknowledges that it supports a wide range of species and habitats. Decimating the last woodland will result in a treeless and barren vista for the village. I would urge you to consider that we are also discussing the loss of open space within the village, and that this should be treated as a similar material consideration to the loss of the land allocated for housing. As above, the argument I would make is that there are alternative brownfield sites that do not involve loss of protected open space/woodland within the village of Dalwhinnie and these sites could be actively re-forested and planted to make the village a more attractive, biodiverse and natural place.

NPF4 Policy 6: “Development proposals will not be supported where they will result in: ii. Adverse impacts on native woodlands, hedgerows and individual trees of high biodiversity value; iii. Fragmenting or severing woodland habitats”

NPF4 Policy 9: “Development proposals that will result in the sustainable reuse of brownfield land including vacant and derelict land and buildings, whether permanent or temporary, will be supported. Proposals on greenfield sites will not be supported unless the site has been allocated for development or the proposal is explicitly supported by policies in the LDP.”

NPF4 Policy 13: “Development proposals for significant travel generating uses will not be supported in locations which would increase reliance on the private car, taking into account the specific characteristics of the area.”

NPF4 Policy 14: “Development proposals that are poorly designed, detrimental to the amenity of the surrounding area or inconsistent with the six qualities of successful places (healthy, pleasant, connected, distinctive, sustainable and adaptable) , will not be supported.”

NPF4 Policy 26: “Development proposals for business, general industrial and storage and distribution uses outwith areas identified for those uses in the LDP will only be supported where: i. It is demonstrated that there are no suitable alternatives allocated in the LDP or identified in the employment land audit; and ii. The nature and scale of the activity will be compatible with the surrounding area. Development proposals for business and industry will take into account: i. Impact on surrounding residential amenity; sensitive uses and the natural and historic environment ii. The need for appropriate site restoration at the end of a period of commercial use.”

NPF4 Policy 30: “Proposals for tourism related development will take into account: i. The contribution made to the local economy; ii. Compatibility with the surrounding area in terms of the nature and scale of the activity and impacts of increased visitors; iii. Impacts on communities, for example by hindering the provision of homes and services for local people iv. Opportunities for sustainable travel and appropriate management of parking and traffic generation and scope for sustaining public transport services particularly in rural areas; vi. Measures taken to minimise carbon emissions.”

Therefore this clearly demonstrates that this proposal does not meet the required guidelines as set out within NPF4 that would allow support of this development.

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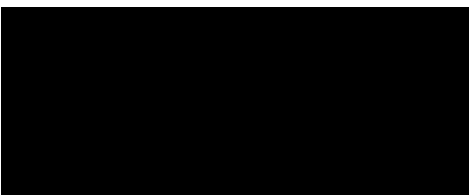
Conditions of planning

As I have communicated on several previous occasions, there are still documents being submitted to CNPA making reference to a “track” or “gated emergency exit” from the proposed development and joining up with the unadopted track to the west of BirchView. These are outwith the planning application boundary and do not currently exist. I have already drawn your attention to the 3m tall heap of boulders/earth/chopped up tarmac that was dumped on the unadopted track west of Birch View, immediately next to the gate newly installed by the applicant that is conveniently shown at the end of the non existent “track” on all the submitted plans. I trust an officer has managed to make a site visit to ascertain that there is no existing track between the proposed caravan park and the unadopted track to the west.

I would also draw your attention to the fact that there have been further references to this track on the drawings and documentation recently submitted to CNPA. On the Drainage Impact Assessment (4th January 2024) Appendix 1, a track is shown. The updated site transit overview of 4th January 2024 also clearly shows a track through the field with two access gates. Within the newly updated Landscape Strategy dated 4th January 2024, again there is a reference to “A stand of Alder is to be planted at the SW of the site adjacent to the gated emergency exit”, and on the accompanying SA103 Site Landscaping Diagram 4th January 2024, we again have features (removal and planting of trees) being proposed beyond the boundary of the development. The Existing Site Plan on the 5th October 2023 also has a track shown that joins the main route through the development. It is particularly frustrating that the most recent documents are still making reference to a track through the field as a fundamental part of the proposed development. I have already had discussions with CNPA officers where I have been assured that any proposal for a track through the field would be outwith the site application boundary and would not be considered as part of the application. Taking into account that the applicant regularly continues to feature a track in the proposed plans, at this stage of proceedings, **I would now like to request that it is made a formal condition of planning that no track should be constructed outwith the boundary area of the application (through the field west of Birch View) including forbidding the laying of any type of surfacing material or fencing that might indicate the presence of an established path.**

Should you have any further queries on the above information, please do not hesitate to contact me at the email address below.

Yours sincerely,



Emma Greenlees

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 27 June 2023 20:41
To: Planning
Subject: objection for CNPA 2023/0245/DET

Categories: Emma G, Comments

I am writing to put in an objection for the Dalwhinnie caravan park, CNPA reference 2023/0245/DET

I have been a long-time visitor to Dalwhinnie for a number of years and am surprised by the size and scale of the proposed project in this small village. I personally have enjoyed visiting this beautiful little spot due to its pristine feeling of wilderness and quiet atmosphere. Adding a business to this location that increase up to 150 people to such a spot changes the whole nature of the village with little benefit to the locals. Never mind the impact of litter to this unspoilt village that this will bring, because, of course bringing all these people into such a small village they will not simply stay on the campervan site.

I come to this village to see beautiful landscapes and wildlife. The area that this is being proposed on, and the surrounding fields, where visitors will undoubtedly be traipsing over, are home to uncommon ground nesting birds, lizards and amphibians. This will severely impact on them.

In addition, you will have people who don't have knowledge or experience of the countryside that will now have access to wilderness, where they don't know how to act around wildlife or will put themselves in dangerous situations. There are already several cases every year of mountain rescue having to go up and bring down foolish underprepared walkers and cyclists from around that exact area, and this number will inevitably increase with this project; further putting a strain on the mountain rescue service. The size of the proposed project is just far too large for such a small village and its services, and will attract the wrong kind of tourist that aren't capable of dealing with or being respectful enough of the surrounding area. The kind of visitors to large campervan sites will be the kind of people that will set up BBQs and campfires in woodlands, will swim in the loch (not very safe) or will stomp across ground bird nests or wild flowers.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]

Emma Greenlees

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 29 June 2023 19:19
To: Planning
Subject: For Emma Bryce case 2023/0245/DET

Categories: Comments, Emma G

To Emma Bryce,

In regards to project 2023/0245/DET.

My parents have been living in Dalwhinnie for years and as such it's a place I often stay at. They moved there as it is a small quiet place with a community atmosphere and nature at their doorstep. Building a campervan park with 30+ caravan bays will effectively double the population size of this small community, irrevocably changing the feel of the place.

It turns it into a tourist spot further risking it becoming yet another rural community full of 2nd homes and airbnbs instead of a quiet place for people to live. There are far better locations for a caravan site that have the infrastructure, facilities and capacity for a venture like this, this is not the right place for it and I therefore am adding my objection.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

Sent from [Outlook](#)

Emma Greenlees

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 29 June 2023 18:00
To: Planning
Subject: Objections to planning application 2023/0245/DET (Dalwhinnie camper van site)
Categories: Comments, Emma G

Ref. Planning Application 2023/0245/DET for a campervan site in Dalwhinnie, 85m north of Birch View

Objections from: [REDACTED]

Key concerns

Boundaries of proposal are not properly defined

There is considerable confusion as to the details of this planning application. Several features appear in some but not all of the submitted plans and word document descriptions. In addition, some features are outwith the indicated boundary for the proposal.

- 1) A "1.8m high embankment" about 5m from the fence of Birch View and therefore outwith the application boundary, is marked on "Site Plan Existing". This does not exist. It is referred to in various documents including a reference to being made of "excavated material" from construction of tracks, and as providing screening for the property Birch View. (Referred to later under Loss of Privacy).
- 2) An emergency exit route is shown in a diagram in "Strategic Design Report" from the furthest end of the campervan stances across an open field to the unadopted track south of Birch View. Any access by foot and/or vehicle from the campervan site to this field west of Birch View is outwith the planning application. This is important for the property Birch View since it would then be surrounded by the proposed development on 3 sides. We fear this field will be used for all the activities not permitted among the campervans e.g. for its shortcut track to walk to Loch Ericht and for smoking, dog walking, for children to explore and possibly even for campfires and barbecues. (Referred to later under Fire Risk and Loss of Privacy).
- 3) The soakaway extends beyond the planning boundary, close to Birch View and towards other houses. This could easily be a source of nuisance smell and of excess surface water since some trees have already been removed here.

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Loss of Privacy

Affording access for campervan visitors to enter the field at the south would result in a loss of privacy mainly for the property Birch View. As described earlier, this area is attractive to visitors for many reasons. However the result is that people and dogs and children can continually enter and walk along any newly constructed track and readily explore right up to 3 sides of Birch View. Furthermore if there were an embankment passing through the wood and field, this would be an irresistible temptation to children to climb. It would then afford a direct view into the property. We envisage that the uses to which people might put this area pose considerable problems for the

maintenance of privacy of Birch View. These include children climbing the fence to retrieve a ball, dogs off lead jumping the fence, litter being dumped over the fence, curious visitors peering in from the track or the embankment or closer to the property, and most seriously, potentially unsociable behaviour involving drinking and causing damage. A most important problem would be the increased fire risk from smoking, discarded bottles or campfires.

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Fire Risk

In summer the grazing ground and birch wood in this area can become extremely dry. The possibility and resulting danger from wildfire is extremely high at such times (remembering the extensive wildfire at Cannich this year). Additionally the prevailing wind direction is from the open grazing ground towards Birch View which is a wooden property. The measures to prevent or deal with fires round the site are inadequate. It seems unlikely that there will be sufficient water pressure for fire hoses within the site, and certainly not to extend beyond the site boundaries. This problem should be addressed with some urgency.

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Water Supply

Extraction of water by tankers from hydrants within the village can cause temporary cessation of supply to the extremities of the village. Supplying the needs of a projected 120 people from the campervans, for replenishing fresh water in vans, for showers, toilets, washing and for cleaning areas of the site, will significantly compromise the supply of water to the existing houses, especially those downstream of the development. It is already stated under "Site standards" that measures to deal with any outbreak of fire in the campervan area depends on an adequate water supply pressure. Our observations tell us that such a pressure does not at present exist, therefore how can the water supply capacity cope with these additional demands? Recently tankers have had to constantly bring in water to the treatment works because of a leak in the system which caused us a temporary cessation of supply. Reports from Scottish Water to the previous planning application indicated that supplying water to the more distant parts of the site might need extra pumping.

-

Potential increased flood risk/Discharge of used water

The used water from the projected 120 people on this site will be released into soakaways in an already fairly wet area within the depleted woodland, and surrounded by roads, tracks and existing houses. The ability of this land to cope with drainage has been investigated in terms of existing rainfall and prior to removal of many trees, but not in terms of this increased demand on its capability.

Construction vehicles and then constant passage of campervans will compact down the ground and the tracks near the soakaways, hindering run-off and drainage of surface water. The proposed screening bank (outwith application boundary) between the campervans and Birch View passes over part of the proposed soakaway (partly outwith application boundary) rendering it impossible to access if any problems arose with it in the future.

All these changes to the surrounding environment raise concerns of an increased flood risk to existing houses and in the general area.

-

Size and scale of the proposed development is excessive in this location

The current proposal will change Dalwhinnie from a quiet country village with open areas at its heart, to a campervan site surrounded by some houses since the projected occupancy of the site well exceeds the total population of the village.

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Loss of habitat – open grazing ground

The proposed campervan site splits into two pieces the open grazing land at the heart of the village. This represents a loss of habitat where campervans are situated, but an additional loss of the grazing land habitat to the south by the continual disruption by people, dogs, vehicles and noise. In this area, as keen birdwatchers, we have observed at least 59 species of bird, including breeding lapwings, mistle thrush, oystercatchers and cuckoos and many animals including at least two species of bats, snakes, red squirrels, pine martens, shrews, hedgehogs, common lizards and stoats among others.

-

Loss of habitat – woodland

A 1.8m high embankment outwith the site boundary as given in some planning documents, is to be constructed through existing birch woodland to provide screening between existing houses to the south and the proposed campervan site. This screening has already been compromised by removal of a significant number of healthy, mature trees to clear certain areas. (Aerial photos such as by Bluesky in Aug. 2020 can provide a comparison to present situation.) Most of these trees were living, as demonstrated by the fact that rabbits have eaten off all the bark. There has also been considerable activity to remove many of the larger sections of tree trunk from the ground. The trees also served to take up a large volume of rainwater in an area where otherwise puddles easily form.

However construction of an embankment of height 1.8m and unspecified but presumably greater base width, will damage both trees and ground cover and decrease the natural uptake of water in this area.

In the remaining woodland area, undisturbed ground cover between the trees will be broken up by construction of tracks, paths and pitch standings.

Already we estimate around 35% of the woodland to the north of Birch View has been removed. From our perspective, it seems that construction work on this project is already underway.

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Nuisance of Noise, Light Pollution, Smells and Rat Population

There will be a significant amount of engine noise from the large number of vehicles entering and leaving the van site and from people's activities outside of the vehicles. Inevitably there will also be an intrusive amount of light from headlights and van windows as vehicles manoeuvre along the tracks. This will also compromise the clarity of the night sky in this quiet location. The proposed mitigation to the south by means of an embankment is entirely unsuitable as already described.

A less damaging mitigation from light intrusion from a campervan site and from headlights from the A889 would be a solid 1.8m high fence to screen all the dwellings to the south.

Smells reaching the neighbouring houses from the rubbish etc in the site and from the soakaways will not be welcome.

Cooking and consumption of food on the site would increase the incidence of rats coming down from the river and the food outlets at the hotel and garage. People at this end of the village are already having to curtail feeding of birds at birdfeeders.

We trust that you will consider our concerns when evaluating this planning application.

Emma Greenlees

From: Emma Bryce
Sent: 12 October 2023 10:28
To: Planning
Subject: FW: Discrepancies in new documents for Planning Application 2023/0245/DET

Categories: Comments, Emma G

For filing on 2023/0245/DET – ‘objection’

Thanks so much 😊

Emma Bryce (she/her)
Planning Manager (Development Management)

T: 01479 870 564
E: emmabryce@cairngorms.co.uk

Usual working hours: Monday to Thursday



**Cairngorms National Park Authority /
Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh**
14 The Square | Grantown on Spey | PH26 3HG
+44 (0) 1479 873 535 | cairngorms.co.uk

Read our plan for the future: cairngorms.co.uk/PartnershipPlan

Sent: Thursday, October 12, 2023 10:14 AM
To: Emma Bryce <emmabryce@cairngorms.co.uk>
Subject: Discrepancies in new documents for Planning Application 2023/0245/DET

[Planning Application 2023/0245/DET for a campervan site in Dalwhinnie 85m north of Birch View](#)

Dear Emma Bryce,

I would like to draw your attention to the following discrepancies on the newly submitted revised plans for the above planning application.

On “Site plan existing 10019369” there are dotted lines (denoting paths?) in the planning application area and in the field between Birch View and the railway line. Such paths do not exist.
Is this intentionally misleading?

Two different arrangements for camper van stances when first entering the main site are shown in the newly submitted plans.

One arrangement is shown on “Site plan proposed 100193610” and “Site landscaping 100193611” but a different arrangement is shown on “Site traffic arrangement 100193612” and “Drainage plan 100193613”.
This latter arrangement was required in 2021 after comments from Highland Council Flood Risk Management Team.

The words “caravan bays” appear only on “:Site plan proposed 100193610” and “Drainage plan 100193613”.

Also on the drainage plan, an "infiltration bed" area has been shown and described as "additional Grey Water disposal" in the "Notes" at RHS of the plan.

With regard to drainage, what does this imply for an area where puddles already form in wet weather, especially following a rain event such as happened last weekend?

Since "caravan bays" and "infiltration bed" are immediately adjacent, what will prevent caravan visitors from emptying chemical toilet waste here?

With regard to water arriving on the site, for the last few months there are already as least 2 tankers delivering water every day to Dalwhinnie water treatment site to serve the existing population. What happens when the population is doubled to include new camper van visitors?

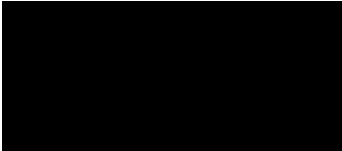
On "Site traffic arrangement 100193612" there is no mention of caravans which would enter/leave the site via the filling station forecourt.

The filling station petrol/diesel pumps have never been marked on the plans even though minor details such as sheds for Birch View and kennels behind Ben Alder cottages are always marked.

Is it even possible (or safe) for caravans to negotiate the filling station and narrow tracks in the camper van site?

Lastly, these new plans have been necessitated by the change to the application boundary to include the complete soakaway area. The new boundary lies within 20m of our Birch View boundary, and therefore all our comments both previously and in this e-mail should be treated as "immediate neighbour" comments.

Yours sincerely,



Planning Application 2023/0245/DET

I am raising the following points to OBJECT to the proposed Planning Application for the Highland Gateway Tourer Site.

This application is a badly reworked and presented attempt to re activate the withdrawn application for the **Dalwhinnie Gateway Touring Site – 2021/0065/DET** in November 2022.

1.The environmental aspects of this planning application –

I am quoting from the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Assessment for the Highland Gateway Touring Site.

The main habitat survey was carried out in December 2020 during winter conditions and when many creatures would be hibernating.

Due to unusually occurring weather conditions, the wading bird survey was postponed until 13/5/2021. “Hayley Wiswell (CNPA) was informed and a request made for data from comparable sites to aid in benchmarking.....given time pressures, a basic report (this document) would be provided in the first instance.”

The Breeding Bird Survey –“the timing of the survey was not appropriate”

The Reptile Survey – “again, the timing of the survey was inappropriate”

Newts –“given that the timing of the work was in most cases sub-optimal”

Water Voles – “given the above, a stage 1 scoping survey was conducted to study the habitat in more detail, the timing of the survey was sub-optimum for recording signs.” Reference is made on the habitat map appendix to “item T5 –“the timing of the survey was sub-optimal” and item T10 – “the survey timing was sub-optimal”

Under the section – A PRELIMINARY WADER BIRD ASSESSMENT FOR THE DALWHINNIE GATEWAY TOURING SITE PROJECT (*I again repeat that this report is not for this named application*) –

“As a mixture of amber and red listed species were presence, their significance and vulnerability is considered **Moderate to High**. At this stage, it is unclear if these results are representative of normal trends.”

From their own environmental expert, (as quoted), the data collected is wanton and requires further investigation at the proper time. I would also submit that if the benchmarking data used included the Acorna Ecology Ltd survey on the Dalwhinnie Quarry carried out in 2018, this site is half a mile away and a completely different elevation and conditions to this one.

The recommended mitigations require that “Construction work in the fields should avoid the ground nesting season (March to July), that work in the woodland area must not take place between March and July and that construction work should not take place in the western part of the field area in February to May to give the potential for nesting in the off-site pines. Work must be restricted to the yard area if this is the case.” What assurances are there to make sure that this will happen and will the CNPA environmental staff monitor this?

2.Site Standards – Paragraph 3.02

Refers to Access Road being One Way – no mention of the filing station traffic.

3.Site Layout Plan SA102 rev C – Shows a 2.4 m timber screening fence around the perimeter of the site which I feel will not improve the visual appearance of the area. In the Landscape Strategy Report, it

mentions the site “nestling within” not “sitting upon” but I do not see this as a wooden palisade is being built around the perimeter of the site. There is also a 1.8 m high embankment detailed on this plan which is clearly outside the boundary of this application and gives no detail as to how far it is from the Birch View property shown but on another plan this is also a timber fence so clarification is required.

Page 6 of the Design Report states – “Boundary Treatment - The boundary is to be planted as per SA 103C Site Landscaping. Birch and Broom are to be utilised with occasional Rowan and Alder to the East of the site. The property to the south of the site, Birch View, is shielded from the site by a dense stand of birch, especially in the summer months, and the proposed 1.8m banking that will not only shield from site but also sound.”

4. Site Traffic Management diagram (SA104 Rev C) shows no traffic flow measures for the filling station. The drawing does not show the position of the fuel pumps at all so no measurements are given for the space between the whisky barrels and the pump islands. No indication is given for the filling station traffic as to whether it will be one way or how this will be handled. It is as though the filling station does not exist in this application. Presently, there is a car wash station and the village recycling point at the eastern end of the filling station forecourt, in front of the tank, next to where the tourer van exit will be and next to the bin lorry park shown on the plan. Currently, I am not aware of any consultation with the villagers to discuss moving the recycling point to another location. The shop for the filling station, (also absent from the plan) is also the village Post office. Presently, you can park beside the post collection box (also not shown on plan) which sits on the central island on at the front of the forecourt and walk to either the box or the post office. There is no pedestrian provision in this plan. People who have historically used this Post Office will be in danger from the increased and larger vehicle traffic flow. There is also a small directional sign shown pointing left and will the traffic management only allow for vehicles turning left? Vehicles will be turning right and going back to the A9 and this will be very dangerous given that the proposal suggests that visitors will be crossing the A889, which has a speed limit of 40mph, to use the hotel eating and drinking facilities as well as negotiating normal traffic some of which requires police escorts due to their size. There is no mention as to when this park will be open during the year i.e. if it will be seasonal or all year and so it can be assumed that some of this traffic negotiation across the A889 will occur at night in the dark. This traffic management plan does not allow for vehicles exiting the campsite and turning sharp right within the forecourt to fill up at the pumps. Are the proposers expecting campers to drive out into the road, turn right and then re-enter the filling station from the entrance to fuel up? This will add an extra danger to the traffic flow. Historically as the filling station has always had a drive through policy from both ends of the site, surely people who are used to this will get very confused and potentially accidents will occur as they try to enter the forecourt from the new ‘exit only’ end?

5. On Entrance Layout – GA104 – One traffic flow is shown on the left side of the filling station vents and on the Traffic Management Plan SA104 rev C, there are two flows shown on the right side of the vents’ island and are shown merging in the area behind the main buildings. Which one of these is accurate?

6. The Landscape Plan SA103 rev C – shows at the entrance on the unmade road “Verge to be maintained and kept weed free” on the outside of the timber fence, which has already been put up with very little room for any planting. This unmade road access which belongs to Ben Alder estate now has much more traffic than at the time of the drawing dated 25.8.2020 for this development, due to the use of it as a walkers’ carpark when accessing the hills beyond the site. The closure of the railway level crossing has necessitated this and the flow of vehicles in the summer is considerable (sometimes as many as 35 vehicles have parked on Ben Alder road to use the level crossing before it closed) and this unmade road is now well established for this use. Therefore, more congestion around this forecourt entrance is likely. This unmade road is also the way into all the properties along this road as well as their exit. There is a SSE Dalwhinnie Workshop and small yard at the end of this road which is used by SSE and vans and other vehicles park up there.

In the previous application, (2012/0065/DET) an emergency escape route was suggested to run from the turning area at the top of the caravan pitches area in the trees down over the field at the side and back of Birch View, to a gate which opens out onto the unmade road. However, as such a route is not proposed in this plan, is there an emergency escape route for those pitched at the back of the site anywhere else? As there are BBQ areas and assume that tourers will use their gas stoves and BBQs while pitched, there is a much higher risk of fire.

7.Site Plan Existing SA101 and Visibility Splays Plan SA106 – both show a distance of 363 m visual distance in a straight line from the site entrance. This visual distance will be impaired with the vehicles turning along the unmade road directly next to the entrance.

When the A9 is dualled, the new bridge and access to Dalwhinnie will be just beyond the current 40mph sign beyond the hotel and will be a right hand turn onto the A889. Also, a small access with parking for 2 vehicles will be constructed just beyond the trees at the back of cottage 1, Woodside, for estate access. (This is to improve an access that is already there). As larger vehicles will take longer to gain speed and move into the village from the bridge, any vehicles exiting the garage might have their view restricted and may take chances to cross the road in front of these slower moving vehicles.

This application assumes that people will all be very careful, drive with caution and consideration and as the rule of Health and Safety assumes the ‘worst case’ scenario, this traffic management application raises cause for concern.

There is reference to a Transport Statement dated 4/2/2021. The data stops in 2019 when Covid lockdown stopped people travelling. In the latest report up to September 2022, Transport Scotland,(TS), reports a significant 12.8% rise in traffic with the NC500 highlighted as a major factor for traffic on ‘A’ roads in the Highlands. TS stated under “Major Safety guidelines for Campervans, Motorbike and other vulnerable road users? The road users mentioned here really demonstrate the diversity of traffic on the NC500 route and why we can’t just think in our own little box. We have to consider what others are having to do to negotiate narrow lanes, tight bends or twisting roads. E.G. a campervan needs more room to manoeuvre and the driver may have hired it so be unfamiliar with the dimensions and controls It only takes one person who is not used to driving a large vehicle to block the road completely for many other road users including work and important emergency vehicles. More vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and bikers can be obscured or camouflaged by other traffic – extra care is required at all times”.

You only have to live here to see how busy the A889 is with construction traffic escorted by the police and large pieces of construction equipment for projects further north seen regularly. There are also a number of large logging lorries with trailers which use this road. After the A9 has been dualled, this corridor will be much more obvious as the road to Skye than at present and this will increase traffic flow again. Whilst the A9 is being dualled, a number of large quarry vehicles from the Leith Quarry at the north end of the village on the A96 towards Catlodge will come through carrying quarried stone and return empty lorries back to the quarry again. Many of these trucks are driven by sub-contractors to the quarry operators and work on bonus – they do not always drive as considerately as we would like due to their time restraints.

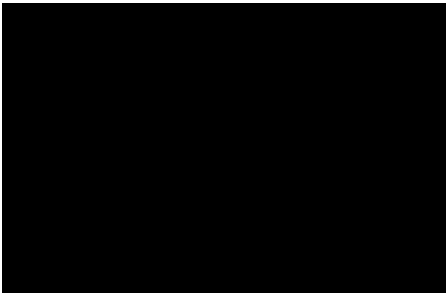
I have other objections about this planning application – excess noise, lighting, litter pollution, odours from the infiltration bed and septic tank and also the plans show a lot of signage which gives no indication of size or if there will be lighting and as signs over a set size need planning applications to Highland Council, will these require separate approvals or are they covered by this one?

No provision is made for future electric vehicle recharging in this application either and apart from low level lighting and a waste recycling point, little evidence of any green operational policies has been established.

I am objecting to the scale and damage to the natural habitat of vulnerable species around Dalwhinnie, how this application has been proposed without any reference to the wellbeing of its neighbours and have doubts as to the appearance of the tourer park. The added danger for people using the area due to such a complicated and congested traffic management plan is very real and I think that a smaller development such as has been in the past on the hard standing area of the current filing station would be appropriate (for 10 vans) as this would also give the other café in the village who is currently offering 5 places for overnight parking some business too.

I know that Badenoch Heritage have been working very hard to promote their 'Stay Another Night' policy and appreciate how local businesses need growth. However, there has to be some consideration for the people who live here too. Everything is not for business and once established habitat and vulnerable species are lost, it is almost impossible to get it back. Dalwhinnie is a quiet and beautiful place where visitors come to get away from urbanisation and development. I want visitors to come here and enjoy this area but as we are a very small village with no school and very little housing with few transport links and no shops, I think that this project is too big. It is not a high employee required venture and will not create a lot of skilled jobs and housing around here is like hen's teeth.

I thank you for your attention to this matter.



Emma Greenlees

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 20 October 2023 20:34
To: Planning
Subject: reference number 2023/0245/DET

Categories: Emma G, Comments

Dalwhinnie Tourer Park Development, reference number 2023/0245/DET

Having looked at the new drawings submitted, my original objections to this possible development as to the traffic management for the site still stand.

The jumbled entrance and exit routes do not show either the petrol pumps or the fuel pump islands in the courtyard. They assume that those exiting the site will all turn left on exiting and will not turn right towards the A9. There is no turning circle anywhere in the village for motorhomes to turn around. My earlier point as to those touring vehicles which need to fill up before leaving will turn right within the forecourt towards the petrol pumps is also not considered on the plans.

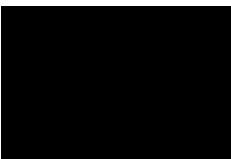
The entrance will also be shared by other non campsite users and this forecourt area exhibits, at times just now, congestion. Local people also enter the garage from both ends at the moment and will no doubt try to do so whether the tourers are there or not. The garage is also used by large vehicles and they can occupy a large part of the forecourt when filling up or parking to go into the shop and this would not leave a lot of space for tourers and caravans.

There is also no designated pedestrian routes indicated on these plans and as the owners intend that those staying on the campsite should use the hotel across the busy A889 for refreshment, I think that this should be addressed.

The matter of the recycling area and the entrance for the existing area, will also be conflicted as per the current submitted plans.

The fact that the new plans show an expanded area being used for the tourer park and the dotted lines showing paths, not explained, showing a route with a gate onto the unadopted lane alongside the proposed site which now leads to a walkers' carpark which during the summer can occupy a large number of vehicles parked in this area, I also object to.

The latest plans submitted do nothing to alleviate my earlier objections but support my questioning as to the details.



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Comments for Planning Application 2023/0245/DET

Application Summary

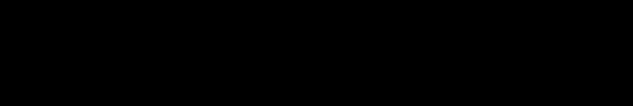
Application Number: 2023/0245/DET

Address: Land 85M North Of Birchview Dalwhinnie

Proposal: Formation of touring motorhome / caravan site

Case Officer: Emma Bryce

Customer Details



Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: This second application for a motorhome/caravan site in the south of the village, even if it meets all the legal planning regulations, will still damage the area irreparably. Hard landscaping cannot do otherwise, damaging the original moorland and its subsequent effect on the biodiversity in and around Dalwhinnie.

I have enjoyed running and walking in the Dalwhinnie area for roughly 20 years. Much of the pleasure I get derives from being in an unspoiled environment - something difficult to find in the urban environment of Glasgow and this blighting not just this area of the Cairngorms Park but across other wild areas of Scotland.

In an era where individuals and local and national organisations are actively encouraged to re-wild as much as we can, indeed, since the first application for this site was lodged, two of my local areas have been set aside as green corridors which is so welcome in an urban setting.

I also wonder about the effect this site would have on the residents in the south of the village not only for the inevitable noise and disruption that would ensue but documents I saw pertaining to the first application noted a high risk of flooding on the site - this is now shown as a medium risk on this application. Has that much changed in the intervening years?

I believe that this development would not benefit the larger community in Dalwhinnie, it will be detrimental to not only the human population of the area but will significantly impact the wildlife as noted above and I think that the application should be rejected.

Yours faithfully,



Emma Greenlees

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 30 June 2023 18:38
To: Planning
Subject: Objection to Planning application - 2023/0245/DET

Categories: Emma G, Comments

Good evening,

I emailed yesterday this objection but was passed the wrong email address. I am resending to the correct email address. I understand the deadline is today so I am hoping you can still process this as it is still the 30th June.

I'd like to submit an objection to the following planning application. Please can you process this for me?

2023/0245/DET | Formation of touring motorhome / caravan site | Land 85M North Of Birchview Dalwhinnie

I have been visiting Scotland since I moved 15 years ago. Dalwhinnie has been a regular stopping point both for visits and as I pass through. I object to this proposal because I think it will ruin the natural remoteness of the landscape and community, because it is littered with inconsistencies and because I can't foresee the benefits it is proposed to offer to community, council, landscape or economy.

There are at least 3 caravan parks within ~15miles of the proposed site. That is a travel time of only around 15-20 minutes in either direction. These already offer overnight stops and breaks in the journey North or South. They have not prevented the overnights stays in laybys on the A9 which are likely as much for the envisaged 'free camping' desire of many holiday makers now, rather than accessible paid camps and services.

The application states the proposed caravan site is "some distance from the established village" and "remote from the village" yet around 20% of the housing is in close proximity (within 100m) of the proposed site. There will potentially be 6 more neighbouring dwellings as part of the land development plan for the area. Coupled with the significant thinning of trees in the birch forest that appears to have occurred since the original application, there is now little screening of light, noise or privacy to the A866, the neighbouring properties or the remote moorland landscape in general.

The site is planned such that children's play areas will be present throughout and the 'natural' un-planned paths form from poor planning of pathways. I can only see that this suggests visitors accessing all areas, taking shortcuts across nearby fields and further disturbing the landscape and privacy of neighbouring properties. There isn't even any detail on the plans for the fence boundary that might mitigate some of these concerns. Is it intended to be sufficiently tall enough to be climb-proof and yet compliment and blend with the natural landscape as designed?

There are discrepancies through the plans and assessments with the inclusion of banks, embankments and tracks that are not present in the application boundaries and are not well defined. Even the number of pitches planned seems to vary within the submitted documents. This leaves a lot of questions about the suitability of the independent assessments and the potential intentions for developing outside the

planning application. A noted embankment south of the planning does not appear to have been assessed for further reduction to the existing birch forest, impacts on flood assessments or interaction with infiltration drainage. An existing track is prominent on some of the plans that is no more than “compacted ground by the occasional use of tractors or quadbikes”.

I would love to see developments in the Dalwhinnie area that create decent opportunities for locals in jobs and economic development, that complement the natural landscape and that bring in visitors respectful for the fragile beauty of the moorland highlands. This does not appear to be one of them.

I therefore object to the plans.

Best regards

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.