

PAPER I

APPENDIX D

Summary of CNPA Natural Heritage Comments

Summary of Landscape and Natural Heritage issues and recommendations

There are a number of interrelated issues regarding the natural heritage and landscape impacts of this site. Attached to this summary is the full report from the Landscape and Ecology Advisors and the details of the issues may be found within these. However in broad terms they may be summarised as follows:

Landscape

The landscape impacts of the proposed development are largely the visual impact of the new store and the consequent removal of the mature trees from its vicinity. In addition there is the need to ensure that the views to the surrounding mountains are maintained as well as the character of the village itself.

The location of the store allows for the maintenance of the views but the landscape proposals fall some way short of conserving or enhancing the character of the village. It therefore does not comply with policy 6 on landscape. However the necessary measures to ensure that the proposal conserves and enhances the landscape character of Aviemore are within the scope of better hard and soft landscape proposals.

Recommendation 1:

The current landscape proposal is not accepted but a condition is placed requiring one in accordance with the comments of the Landscape officer.

Biodiversity

There is a significant loss of biodiversity value on the site through the extensive felling of the mature protected trees on site and the removal of a high quality pond. The number of trees to be felled is not clearly defined because the plan includes an open ended qualification. The applicant states that the landscape proposals adequately mitigate for the loss of biodiversity. However we do not agree with this assessment because the losses to habitats are not directly mitigated in the proposals. In addition the various measures outlined on the landscape plan do not in themselves offer alternatives that are of sufficiently high enough quality or extensive enough area to constitute effective mitigation or compensation. This is not in accordance with our planning guidelines and does not comply with policy 5 in the local plan.

In order to comply with the policy and be in accordance with the guidance, mitigation should be agreed. The most appropriate way to mitigate for the loss of habitat for the Northern Damselfly is by undertaking a suitable translocation exercise. This will have to be informed by a survey of suitable, local ponds as previously stated. To mitigate for the loss of broader pond life, a new pond should be created in the Aviemore area, which makes use of material from the existing pond to aid species establishment. The loss of trees should be clearly identified on plan and mitigation should be linked to replacements of suitable type across the site.

Recommendation 2

The current open-ended indication on tree losses is not accepted and that all trees to be retained are clearly identified on plan and on site. A full tree protection plan is required. Replacements may be identified within the landscape plan as per recommendation 1 above.

Recommendation 3

The loss from the site of the Northern Damselfly is mitigated by a translocation exercise to suitable habitat following a survey of existing ponds. The details of the work should be agreed by the CNPA and work undertaken in accordance with the agreed detail prior to the removal of the pond from the site or any works around it.

Recommendation 4

The loss of the mature pond should be mitigated by the provision of a new pond of at least equal size and 'seeded' with material from the old pond in accordance with details agreed by the CNPA.