

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK DEPOSIT LOCAL PLAN

EVIDENCE SUPPORTING OBJECTIONS BY THE CAIRNGORMS CAMPAIGN

The Cairngorms Campaign's evidence focuses on two policy areas of the Local Plan. These are the lack of protection of wild areas from the spread of upland tracks and the lack of a sustainable tourism strategy, in particular in relation to the scale of holiday home construction envisaged by the Plan.

1.Lack of Protection of Control of the Spread of Bulldozed Tracks and Their Impact on Wild Land and Other Negative Impacts

1.1 The Historical Importance of the Issue in the Cairngorms

The spread of bulldozed tracks into wild areas of upland Scotland has been a significant issue for many years, especially in the Cairngorms. The late Tom Weir raised the issue publicly as far back as 1969. Dr Adam Watson did enormous work mapping their spread in the Cairngorms, much of which was summarised in the 1976 report by the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology in 1976 (1) and informed the 1978 report on the topic by the then Countryside Commission (2). During the 1970s. Dr Robert Aitken surveyed wilderness areas of Scotland (3) and consulted users of these areas through a questionnaire. His work demonstrated the importance of wild land in the Cairngorms in the Scottish context and the value respondents placed upon it. 1980 saw regulations introduced requiring planning permission for tracks above 300m in National Scenic Areas but Dr Watson published a major 1981-1982 survey of tracks and their construction in the Cairngorms in the Journal of Environmental Management (4) . It showed 1151km of bulldozed track, 49% of it on new lines, often poorly engineered. His map showed how a once huge intact area of remote country had been reduced to fragments.(See Appendix 1) He concluded, "--response to a complex problem involving many groups of people can be so slow that the eventual controls come too late to give adequate protection to the most outstanding areas for scenery and wildlife." During these years, individual bulldozed tracks in the Cairngorms were the subject of fierce public controversy, such as in Glen Ey and on Ben Avon.

That this is part of a longterm, Highland wide, trend that is steadily encroaching on wild land is demonstrated by the recent survey by Scottish Natural Heritage (5) which concluded that, "*The findings of this pilot project provide quantitative support to the widespread perception that the Scottish wild land resource has experienced progressive incursion by hydro schemes, afforestation and road/track construction over the last 100 years.*"

It follows that the Cairngorms National Park Authority could not but have been aware that bulldozed tracks and their intrusion into wild areas and other negative impacts were a topic of major widespread public concern. Despite this, the issue of wild land was tackled in the Park Plan only after considerable public pressure.

1.2 Origins of Vehicular Tracks in the Cairngorms

In the Cairngorms, hilltraxks are now extending in several ways. Some are simply and crudely constructed by bulldozers. A commoner way now is when landrovers or tracked All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) are driven across open ground until the consequent vegetation damage leads to the development of a rough, and often eroding track. A further way is when these eroded areas are then "made up" with hard core quarried along the way to make a hard surface. Each of these methods is illustrated in the photographs included with this evidence.

1.3 Impacts of Vehicular Tracks in the Cairngorms

Vehicular tracks cause negative impacts in several ways.

1.3.1 Intrusion into Wild Roadless Areas

Bulldozed tracks intrude massively into wild roadless areas. The sixteen pictures attached to this evidence, drawn from all over the Eastern Cairngorms, not just the National Park, illustrate these problems. The impacts are detailed in Table 1. The work of Dr Adam Watson mentioned above has demonstrated the scale of intrusion into wild areas and the situation has worsened since then.

1.3.2 Massive Landscape Scarring

Examples of landscape scarring are given in the attached photos. The contrast between soil colour and vegetation ensures such tracks and are widely visible in the landscape, often from a distance of miles. This impact is increased by the deposits of outwashed soil and gravel downhill of many tracks

1.3.3 Damage to Soils and Soil Plant Systems

Hilltracks damage sensitive soil/plant systems, and significantly increase soil erosion. The photos give examples of this. Brown and Clapperton summarise the soil types of the Cairngorms (6). They emphasize the vulnerability of the soils and soil/plant systems due to low fertility of the parent material, immaturity of the soils and limited growing season, pointing out how this vulnerability increases with altitude. Particularly vulnerable are the thin, infertile granitic soils of the higher altitudes and the peaty podzol soils lower down. Our photographic illustrations demonstrate both impacts.

The scale of soil loss and erosion caused by tracks has almost certainly been underestimated in Scotland but has been more carefully studied in the USA. In one study for example (7), 1659 cubic metres of soil eroded from 6.6 km of such tracks over a four-year period. Such impacts are significantly greater where bulldozed tracks are poorly engineered, are at wrong gradients, or without proper drainage. Such tracks, whether made by direct construction or all terrain use of vehicles, require maintenance and without it further soil erosion and landscape scarring occurs.

1.3.4 Disturbance of the Balance of Access

The sustainable use of the fragile areas of the high Cairngorms depends on a carefully managed balance between ease of access and vulnerability of these areas. Curry-Lindhal, Watson and Watson (8) summarised this conundrum saying of it, “*A fragile ecosystem, it can withstand very little human pressure. This view does not arise from any desire to exclude people; it is dictated by the nature of the climate and terrain themselves. It is for this very reason that the management of the area as a wilderness with a low level of human use dovetails with the two other main land uses – water catchment and the protection of wildlife sensitive to disturbance and trampling.*”

In short, the issue extends far beyond the protection of wilderness to include the protection of those habitats designated under UK and EU legislation, including the Habitats Directive. The results of giving ease of access to vulnerable areas were dramatically demonstrated in detail when walkers were permitted to use the chairlift in Coire Cas to access the Cairn Gorm –MacDhui plateau. Dr Adam Watson, demonstrated that numbers of persons using the plateau increased 100 times, foot traffic damaging vegetation created bare ground along new footpaths of steadily increasing width, and windblown gravel from this, in the windy terrain spread the damage downwind to even more extensive areas(9).

The creation of upland tracks disturbs this balance of access in several ways. Firstly, many hills in the Cairngorms, due to the way glaciers shape valleys have steep bouldery approaches from the valley floor difficult for landrovers to ascend. However, in the upper reaches, there is less steep but vulnerable terrain easily driven over by landrovers. Track construction provides motorised access to these upper slopes and permits landrovers etc to range widely causing damage. Secondly, tracks provide easier and speedier access for walkers, hence increasing the frequency of visitors to remote areas. Generations of walkers and climbers around the Cairngorms have understood the protective function of *“the long walk in”* as a democratically fair and effective measure for protecting vulnerable wild areas. Lastly, technology creates new and often more mechanised recreations of which the advent of mountain byking is an example. These tracks permit speedy access to remote areas previously protected by a long walk in. These things sometimes act in concert. For example, the construction of a bulldozed track without planning permission on Invercauld estate, in accidental concert with footpath construction on Mar Lodge estate has now led to a situation where mountain bykers start from the car park are the road in Invercauld and dismount on the slopes of Ben Avon – an area previously protected by its remoteness.

1.3.5 Damage to Historic Routes

Some obliterate ancient historical routes. The military road leading east to Corgarff was one of the finest surviving examples of its kind, in good passably condition for landrovers, including three stone-arched bridges and leading to Corgarff castle. Shortly after £330,000 of public money had been spent stabilising the bridges, new shooting tenants on the estate had the historic road obliterated and replaced by a crudely bulldozed track with drainage systems that were deteriorating in one year replacing those so skilfully designed they had functioned for some 250 years..

1.4 The Balance of Justifications Between Hilltracks and Wild Land Protection

Such tracks are justified on the grounds of being necessary for estate management. This assertion should not be taken at face value. Firstly, many estates in other parts of the Highlands, often operating in steeper terrain, manage without such tracks. Secondly, two environmental organisations with large landholdings in the Cairngorms (RSPB at Abernethy and upper Glen Avon and National Trust for Scotland at Mar Lodge estate) operate without the need for extending hilltracks. Indeed the National Trust has taken out many km of hilltrack and continues to operate an increasingly successful business of deerstalking. Lastly, it should be realised that estates in the Cairngorms are now often owned by immensely wealthy individuals who own them simply for the purpose of personal recreation through hunting. Examples are Glen Feshie Estate (now with its third Danish owner in ten years), Glen Avon Estate now owned by the Sultan of Benin, and the Loch Ericht Estate, now owned by his financial adviser Mr Schwarzenbach. Such owners may spend one to several £m upgrading a hunting lodge or building a new one, but only visiting the area occasionally for recreation. Such estates are essentially simply holiday homes owned by people who can well afford to employ extra staff to manage the land without the “advantage” of hilltracks.

Against this is the widespread social, economic and environmental value of wild areas. Even prior to Aitken’s survey of wild land and its users, it was widely appreciated that many people placed high value upon them. The collective evidence of witnesses to the 1981 Lurchers Gully Public Inquiry led the reporter to conclude that, even by their sheer numbers far less quality of their evidence, a wide range of people placed a high value on the wild areas of the northern Cairngorms. A thorough assessment of the economic value of mountaineering and hillwalking to

the Highland economy (10) concluded that these activities, which did not take account of further income and jobs from simply rambling and other forms of walking, led to £163.7m per annum, creating some 6000 jobs. A significant part of this impact occurs on and around the Cairngorms. Economically, figures quoted in the same survey showed this far exceeded income from grouse shooting and deerstalking combined.

Much more recently and significantly, a national survey of attitudes to wild land in Scotland, commissioned by Scottish Natural Heritage, interviewed over 1,000 people were interviewed, including 300 in the Cairngorms (11). It concluded that:-

- 1) The vast majority of residents (91%) think it important for Scotland to have wild places, and that they contribute to Scottish identity.
- 2) Woodlands, forests, mountains, hills, lochs and moorlands were all rated highly as wild areas. Scotland was seen as having a lot of wild areas, especially in the north, west and east Highlands, the Western Isles and the Northern Isles
- 3) Wild places are most commonly valued because they are seen as part of Scotland's culture, heritage and tourist industry. They are also seen as important for wildlife and nature, the environment, and the local economy.
- 4) Half the people interviewed believe that wild places in Scotland are under threat and around three in five residents thought that action is required to preserve wild areas in Scotland.
- 5) Overall, the key perceived threats to wild areas were development, urbanisation and humans.

Most significantly, this survey showed that wild areas are not only important to people for a range of non-economic reasons, but that they are important to many people who probably never or rarely visit them.

SNH has now adopted a policy on wild land stating the policy aim to be: -
“SNH identifies as its policy aim that: there are parts of Scotland where the wild character of the landscape, its related recreational value and potential for nature are such that these areas should be safeguarded against inappropriate development or land-use change. The only uses of these areas should be of a low key and sensitive nature, which do not detract from their wild qualities. Within the main areas of wild land, a restrictive approach to development should be taken, as these will be landscapes where development is inimical to their character.”¹

Taken overall, the balance of benefits for retaining and restoring wild land far outweighs the claimed benefits advanced by landowners for creating them hence lies heavily towards preventing and removing upland tracks in wild area!

1.5 Planning Policies and Hill Tracks

Prior to designation of the Cairngorms National Park, Aberdeenshire Council's Local Plan contained a policy under Env/21 stating that *“Vehicle Hill Tracks Development involving vehicle hill tracks, insofar as it is not Permitted Development, will be refused unless it can be integrated satisfactorily into the landscape and minimize detrimental impact, such as soil erosion, on the environment including habitats and watercourses.”* This in itself does not seem an adequate policy but the Park Plan that initially replaced it did not even contain this.

¹ Policy Statement 02/03 Wildness in Scotland's Countryside

However, the current **Park Plan**, under OUTCOMES FOR 2012, states that:-

*“i. A Landscape Plan for the Park will identify the natural, cultural and built landscape qualities, the factors influencing them and underpin actions for positive management.
ii. The key areas for the experience of wild land qualities will be identified, protected and enhanced as a major source of enjoyment of the Park and wild land qualities throughout the rest of the Park will be safeguarded.”*

It further states that,

“To achieve the five year outcomes the following actions are needed:

1 Landscape

2 Historic Environment

Prepare a Landscape Management Plan based on a systematic review of the existing natural, historic and cultural landscape character related to planning control, land management and enhancement actions.

As part of the formulation of the Landscape Management Plan, identify core areas of the Park where wild land experiences are especially significant and quantify the levels of wild land experience throughout the rest of the Park.

Identify detractors from wild land qualities and begin a programme of action to mitigate their impacts including down-grading of unnecessary vehicle tracks to paths, upland path repairs and extending control over the construction of new developments including telecommunication masts, electricity lines and construction or upgrading of vehicle tracks.”

Considering the Deposit Local Plan, para 4.35 acknowledges the importance of wild land qualities in the Park, and para 4.36 states that the Park Plan *“highlights the importance of the sense of wildness that can be experienced in the Park ---“*

Policy 7 Landscape of the Local Plan , referring to the need for development to enhance the Park’s qualities of wildness states developments damaging to these would only be permitted if the benefits:-

a) “Are outweighed by the social or economic benefits of primary importance to the aims of the National Park; and

b) Have been minimized and mitigated to the satisfaction of the planning authority through appropriate siting, layout, design and construction.”

1.6 Grounds for the Cairngorms Campaign’s Continued Objection

1.6.1 The Issue now extends for beyond the deliberate building of hilltracks

As our photographic evidence shows, tracks are increasingly created simply by freerange driving over vulnerable terrain. Also, protection of wild areas is inseparable from protection of SACs, SPAs etc where both occur on vulnerable terrain as is common in the Cairngorms.

The Cairngorms Campaign asserts that the CNPA’s policies must take the realities of this situation into account.

1.6.2 Mismatch between Park Plan and Local Plan Policies

These plans should be in alignment but there is a clear mismatch between the policies and underlying aims of the two, with a much greater emphasis on restoration and removal of tracks in the Park Plan than in the Local Plan, which carefully evades

mention of the hilltracks and does not mention restoration, as in the Park Plan. Policy 3, on the protection of National Natural Heritage Designations covers National Scenic Areas within the Park. The above national survey alone shows that wildness in land is an important component of landscape that people value in NSAs. but the constraints envisaged are much more specific, requiring that the *“objectives of the designated areas and overall integrity of the area would not be compromised”* and referring to qualities of national importance and not simply those within the aims of the Park as in the Local Plan. There is not consistency with the Local Plan or between the two Plans.

The Cairngorms Campaign asserts that the two plans must be in alignment and that therefore restoration should be part of the policies in the Local Plan also as there is a clear case for the restoration of the now fragmented areas of wild land to a large whole. It also asserts that the constraints listed to protect wild landscapes under policy 7 should be as stringent as those listed under Policy 3 for the protection of National Natural Heritage Designations.

1.6.3 Landowners can now evade the policies as outlined in the Local Plan

Much of the extension of upland tracks now takes the form of the gradual erosion of tracks into the landscape by vehicles driving over open terrain, followed in various cases by hardcore being deposited. Such activities would be unlikely to come before any planning authority. Landowners or their agents are now also evading the legislation by putting a small number of sheep onto remote areas to reduce tick populations to enhance grouse shooting and arguing the track is therefore for agricultural purposes and hence escapes planning controls.

The Cairngorms Campaign asserts that the policies must also take account of these trends.

1.6.4 The balance of benefits weighs so strongly against the creation of upland tracks that stringent measures are justified to prevent and remove them.

We have offered reasons for this stance above.

2. Lack of a Well Founded Sustainable Tourism Strategy and its Links to Housing Policy

The four founding principles, called aims, of the National Park emphasize sustainability. The fourth in particular states, *“To promote the sustainable social and economic development of the communities in the Park.”* Broadly, they outline an approach to sustainable development applicable anywhere. Two important points derive from this. They thus encompass both the social and economic development of communities. Also, sustainable development may involve action at the local level, but always with global considerations strongly in mind. Both these points are pertinent to this evidence and connect to the Plan's Housing policies.

2.1 Implications of the Plan's Housing Policies for Tourism Development

The Plan rightly focuses on providing adequate affordable housing for residents. Since intensive tourism development is focused on Badenoch and Strathspey District, this evidence considers the situation there.

The period 1991-2001 saw some 1000 housing completions in the District for a population increase of only 800, a situation that indicates an occupancy rate of 0.8 as against a national average of well over 2. The difference is largely accounted for by the fact that a large proportion of these houses were simply holiday homes, addressing some wants but **not** housing need. This trend is well illustrated by the

more recent development at Dalfaber in Aviemore which has resulted in 60% of the housing being sold on the open market to second home owners. By our calculations, at present, another 1280 houses are either under construction, have outline or full planning permission, or are provided for in the Local Plan. In Aviemore alone, although a study by Heriot Watt University of housing needs projected a need for 54 houses per annum in Aviemore over the next 5-10 years, mostly for the affordable end of the spectrum, 250 houses are already either under construction or have outline planning permission. In addition, close by at An Camus More, there is now a proposal for the construction of 1500 houses. This proposal was originally conceived before Cairngorms National Park was designated. It arose in preparation for the 1997 Local Plan for Badenoch and Strathspey, produced by Highland Council. It was carried forward within the 2001 Structure Plan. The basis of its acceptance within these Plans was that Cambusmore, as it was then called, would contribute to solving the problem of retaining economically active families in the area where availability of affordable housing was an issue.

The total proposed scale of housing construction is far greater than the need for housing for local residents, whether affordable by lower paid workers or not. The great bulk of this housing will become holiday homes. Even though the National Park Authority has stipulated in its Deposit Local Plan that up to 40% of new housing developments within the National Park should be affordable, this would leave the bulk of it being sold as holiday homes and the total need for housing for residents is far less than the total number of new houses proposed or indeed 40% of it.

This situation has implications at global, regional and local levels.

2.2 Implications for Sustainable Development Globally

As pointed out, sustainable development may involve action at the local level, but always with global considerations strongly in mind. The foremost issue needing consideration at this time is the impending crisis of climate change, as driven mainly by carbon dioxide emissions. This crisis, as central governments are now being forced to acknowledge, requires stringent examination of policies, and this must be particularly true within a National Park founded on principles emphasizing sustainability. A major part of these emissions come from construction alone – such as the large-scale construction of houses. Further emissions arise from the equipping, heating and maintenance of these houses. It may be argued that the emissions created at this local level are relatively insignificant on the global scale, but effective mitigation of climate change will require each locality and community to adjust its ways and make its contribution, especially in an area like a National Park based on sustainable development. In the end, climate change could be highly destructive of the local tourist industry. Such emissions may be justifiable when making provision for necessary social housing, but not for large-scale provision for holiday homes and the Local Plan's housing policies should not support it.

2.3 The Lack of a Thought-Through Tourism Development Strategy

2.3.1 The Crisis in Mountain Tourism

The Local Plan section on tourism and tourism development makes clear commitment to sustainable tourism. Tourism is the mainstay of the local economy in Badenoch and Strathspey. Intensive tourism development in many mountain areas is in crisis. Once hailed as the saviour of remote mountain areas, tourism development has become increasingly controversial as its benefits become outweighed by the social, environmental and economic damage of over-development or the wrong kind of development. The work of Krippendorf has been instrumental in characterising the true nature of sustainable communities. He developed his ideas fully in his famous

book, "The Holiday Makers." (12) Much of this work has largely come about through observation of the development mistakes of the French Alpine resorts. Here, tourism development has become divorced from local communities and as a result the environmental and aesthetic consequences have become major problems. As far back as the 1970s, viewing the crisis in the Alps, Krippendorf, then Professor of Tourism at Vienna University, were warning declaring "*Tourism is its own worst enemy; in seeking to promote and exploit the industry's one great asset, the countryside and its inhabitants, it destroys it to provide cableways, hotels, second homes and all the amenities of urban life.*" "*There is no other area of planned human activity,*" he declares, "*where the cardinal principles of conservation are of such overriding importance*". (13)

2.3.2 The Key Issues in Sustainable Tourism

A great deal of other work has been done in the last 30 to 40 years on the characteristics of sustainable tourism and sustainable communities within national parks in Europe. This is not the place for a full review of this extensive research and experience, but selected references illustrate the key points. The two key issues were well summed up by Brugger and Messerli in their paper "The Problems" in a volume that reviewed lengthy experience of tourism development in the Swiss mountain regions.(14) These they describe as *Autonomy Versus Dependency*, and *Economy Versus Ecology*. Their key questions focus on the environmental, political and cultural carrying capacity of mountain regions for development.

Regarding *economy versus dependency*, they point out that the greater the scenic, wildlife, and adventure potential of the landscape, the greater is the local and external desire to develop it and it attracts large scale investment that does not come from within the area. "*This, in turn, leads not only to a clear dominance of external over local interests, but as well to the danger of political impotence and cultural erosion. Many communities are surprised by the effects of tourism development. Local agencies and local political power may be too weak to carry out autonomous policies and local identity is undefended.*" In short, local communities lose control over the tourism development originally intended to benefit them.

Regarding *economy versus ecology*, they are referring to the well established tendency for tourism development to overdevelop and irreversibly damage the environmental resource on which it is based on and which Krippendorf referred to so strongly. "*Areas with the finest landscape, flora and wildlife have the greatest potential and these have the most balanced ecology,*" they point out, continuing, "*The market mechanism destroys its own resource. True costs are only visible in the long run, they accumulate, and the damaged resources are not replaceable.*"

Alongside this has arisen the "*hard tourism versus soft tourism*" debate. By hard tourism is generally meant investment in large-scale developments like Aviemore Highland Resort, timeshare and holiday homes, and by soft tourism is meant development focused on small scale, locally owned, hotels, farm accommodation, bed and breakfast, etc. To demonstrate the point, the contrast between areas of the Alps in this respect is revealing. Bernard Debarieux (15) compares French with Swiss and Austrian resorts. In the French resorts, second home ownership is dominant. In Swiss and Austrian ones, government encouraged accommodation to be in small hotels or bed and breakfasts etc. Thus large French resorts often have twice the number of bed spaces (35,000-40,000) of equally large Swiss and Austrian ones (often much fewer than 20,000). As a result, annual occupancy in bednights in establishments in a French area like Savoie is only 48, but in the Austrian Tyrol averages 114. Further, much more of the money spent on the soft tourism accommodation is spent locally than with the hard tourism. Other studies have

brought out the massive negative implications the French approach has in its scale of construction of buildings, roads, services, their local direct environmental impacts on landscape and ecological resources, their damaging social and economic impacts and, their wider effects on carbon dioxide emissions and hence climate change.

2.3.3 Implications of These Well Established Principles For Tourism Development in Badenoch and Strathspey

Are parallel scenes now gradually unfolding in Badenoch and Strathspey in the Cairngorms National Park? Are such insights being applied? These important findings have major implications for any strategy on tourism development and hence, in this case also for housing policy. In Badenoch and Strathspey and clear warnings that this is so have long been cited.

In 1980, Getz (16) completed a three-year study of tourism development there.² He concluded that, to date, the benefits brought by tourism and related developments outweighed the problems and costs created. Getz, reporting his conclusions in the *Scottish Geographic Magazine*, warned *“Promotion of new developments in tourism and increased demand cannot be justified on the basis of benefits to the host population in Badenoch and Strathspey unless concrete measures are taken to disperse demand more widely. The continuing concentration of growth and visitors at and near Aviemore will have adverse ecological and social effects on that central portion of the district while depriving peripheral settlements of potentially life giving all-year jobs.”* But Aviemore Highland Resort has now received planning permission for the second phase of its development plans - a massive £80 million mixed use development comprising residential, retail, office, community, leisure and environmental improvements, roads, additional lodges and hotel extensions to create a new village centre including 60,000 sq feet of retail space, 40,000 sq feet of office space, 280 homes and a seven story block of holiday apartments.

In contrast, at the same time as Getz completed his work, the situation caught the attention of Fritz Schwarzenbach, then a leading expert on Alpine development. He and others regarded Aviemore then as having international significance as a classical example of bad tourist development. In 1983, Watson and Watson (17), considering the implications of their study tour of Swiss Alpine Tourism Development for Scotland, drew attention to how Alpine research showed how over-development of tourism damages communities. Once, for example, the number of tourist beds exceeds the number of resident beds by about 2:1, local people find themselves permanent strangers in their own community and community identity and cohesion erodes. Aviemore passed that ratio in the early 1980s!

Recent studies on the hard versus soft tourism discussion have included Badenoch and Strathspey. (18) Here, hard tourism is overwhelmingly dominant, due to the development of Aviemore. Daily spending by tourists accommodated in “hard tourism” development, it was found, is about twice that by those in “soft tourism” accommodation, but against that, operators of soft tourism *“purchase less than a quarter of their inputs from outside the regional economy in both study areas, whereas this figure is much higher for hard tourist businesses.”* Partly due to this, soft tourism makes up for the difference in spend as it generates more jobs per unit of spend. Even more importantly, it is also known that quite small increases in local spend greatly stimulate the local economy. To this also can be added the profits of hard tourism go largely to distant shareholders and the control of decisions on development passes to the, usually distant, management of the large companies. Commenting on this hard tourism the authors say, *“This industry was not the product*

of endogenous enterprise, and has been nurtured and developed by significant public sector investment, effectively creating an externally owned, enclave economy associated with tourism." The issue of *economy versus dependency* comes in clearly.

The development of the global market for tourism has now placed strong pressures on the older mountain resorts in the Alps in an era of raised environmental awareness, forcing them strongly to rethink their values and address environmental and community issues. Recent publications³ describe initiatives like the "Green Villages in Austria." Tourism, as Watson and Watson (17) found, is an industry of fashions and these change. Alpine experience shows that resorts that retain a strong traditional sense of place and amenity, like Grantown-on-Spey, are positioned to move on to a new tourism, but those that have developed, like the architecturally incoherent, concreted Aviemore, have great problems.

Housing development locally, is mainly large scale development, mainly for holiday homes, and hence as pointed out, is de facto a hard tourism development strategy largely in the hands of large developers. Krippendorf's held that sustainable communities should be characterised by **small** scale developments, in harmony with sensitive, rural environments. This has been supported by other Alpine researchers, who have found that, where development takes place through small-scale local builders, these firms can then sustain themselves through work on maintenance and improvement of established properties. In contrast, large-scale developers must constantly seek new developments and create a continuous pressure for development.

This issue is now pressing in Badenoch and Strathspey. Local builders have opposed plans by Muir Homes to build 193 houses at Grantown on Spey. 30 building firms are reported as objecting to the Local Plan, as they fear major builders will monopolise housebuilding. A spokesman for the objectors is quoted "*Without a supply of small building sites to sustain local builders, their firms will undoubtedly falter and in some cases may fail*". (Strathspey and Badenoch Herald January 2 2009) The local community at Boat of Garten has opposed another large development there, and Large scale developers have already bought up much of the land allocated for housing around communities like Kingussie. A recent, web-based poll by The Strathspey and Badenoch Herald produced an 80% vote against large housing developments in the area.

It is clear that the fundamental issues raised by tourism researchers in the Alps and elsewhere have relevance to the situation in Badenoch and Strathspey and indeed to the entire Cairngorms National Park. The development of the global market for tourism has now placed strong pressures on the older mountain resorts in the Alps in an era of raised environmental awareness, forcing them strongly to rethink their values and address environmental and community issues.

Recent publications describe initiatives like the "Green Villages in Austria." 19) support the findings described earlier. It might be possible for the Cairngorms National Park Authority to consider these carefully and yet derive the same tourism policy and inextricably linked housing policy in its Local Plan, though it would be difficult to see how. What is not possible is to arrive at such policies without careful consideration of these issues and no such consideration has been evident either in the Authority's Sustainable Tourism report, not in preparation of its Local Plan.

On these grounds, the Cairngorms Campaign urges that the current housing and tourism development and housing policies are rejected and reconsidered in the light of our understanding of the principles of sustainable tourism development.

2.4 Impact of Local Plan's Tourism/Housing Policies at a Local Level

The housing development we have sited is concentrated in the Straths around the main settlements, particularly in the district of Badenoch and Strathspey. In the straths lie the great majority of the broadleaved woodland of the Cairngorms, the bulk of its ancient pinewoods, and open grasslands, often in close proximity to these settlements. The recent work of the Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group and Buglife have demonstrated the underestimated richness of the biodiversity of these areas. Many of these areas around settlements are now coming under pressure for a series of large scale and smaller housing development proposals that in Badenoch and Strathspey, in-toto, are having a major impact on this varied and highly valued environment.

The built environment of the Straths includes classical examples of planned villages like Grantown-on-Spey and Ballater, a distinctly Scottish cultural feature where the design of settlements encompassed a sense of architectural and social cohesion, a sense of place, often centred on communal features like central public squares and parks. Aviemore, in contrast, entirely lacks these features and seems to exemplar an architectural and communal incoherence.

The environment of the Straths is significant for more than its high biodiversity. Despite the emphasis in much tourism marketing literature for example on the high mountain areas, it is the environment of the Straths which the visiting tourist chiefly experiences. It is also the environment that daily surrounds local residents and provides them with a diversity of open accessible green spaces, various forest and woodland areas, waterways, lochans and other natural and seminatural features. Such an environment has an enormous experiential value for people as well as for biodiversity and science. Increasingly, studies are showing the close relationship between human wellbeing, as opposed to just health, and peoples' exposure to a diverse green environment. It is particularly important that children growing up locally have access to this rich range of recreational opportunities and direct experiences of the natural world that enhances their development and lives enormously. It is instructive to contrast the diversity of such opportunities for such experiences facing small children growing up of children growing up in these traditional planned villages like Kingussie or Grantown on Spey as they stand with those slowly being increasingly inaccessible to children growing up in sprawling, rapidly expanding Aviemore. ! These assets should therefore be carefully protected for sound social and economic reasons but large scale housing development around such settlements damage their sense of place and community and reduce access to these assets.

This is yet another reason to reject the Tourism/Housing Policies in the Local Plan envisaging large scale housing development around such communities largely to provide holiday homes.

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No	Content	Comment
1	Restored bulldozed track on route to Beinn Abhuird on Mar Lodge estate	Demonstrates major landscape scarring even after extensive efforts taken to restore the track. This track was bulldozed by a previous landowner right on to the arctic alpine plateau
2	Same Track close up view	Demonstrates the slow rate of recovery of vegetation on poor soils and at altitude.
3	Recent bulldozed track on Invercauld Estate	Shows lack of drainage that will ultimately lead to steady erosion of surface soils.
4	Crudely bulldozed track near Geallaig Hill in Southern Cairngorms near Ballater	Crudely installed side drainage on steepening slope created by simply digging out material at the side and dumping it on side vegetation which is then severely damaged. The "drainage" ditch will continue to erode out.
5	At higher altitude on same hill as 4.	This demonstrates a classic problem with such tracks. The fine material is eroded out leaving a surface of large loose stones it is difficult to drive landrovers on. These are scraped out and dumped on the side vegetation to produce a new smoother surface. Erosion of the fine material starts again and the scraping off of stones is repeated. As this process continues, the track is deepened, encouraging stronger flows of water down it and increasing erosion. The top end of damage to downhill vegetation from flows off the track is visible at the foot of the picture and extends considerably downhill.
6	Neglected, now unpassable, bulldozed track near Water of Aven in Southern Cairngorms	The neglect of good drainage has led to the situation that all that is left of the track surface is a narrowing strip of ground between 45cm (18") deep eroded trenches. Large quantities of this eroded soil will have reached water courses.
7	Track developed up full height of Glas Tullaichan at 1051m	The landscape impact is massive and, at higher altitudes, is simply created by driving over increasingly vulnerable soil/plant systems. As a result, the track becomes wider and wider with altitude as shown in photos 8,9 and 10. .
8	At mid altitude, the same track	The track is no longer "engineered" in any sense but created by driving uphill on vulnerable vegetation and exposing infertile, highly erodable soils
9	Near the summit, same track	The track is now 12 metres or more wide and widening over time as landrovers drive up smoother edges
10	The summit of Glas Tullaichan at 1051m	A large summit area is used as a turning and parking area, devolving it of all vegetation.

Table 1 Explanation of Photographs

11	Impacts on vegetation in the Strathdon hills	Lichens growing on heather give this vegetation its grey-green colour. Lichen rich heaths are an important form of vegetation in the Cairngorms. It takes only one passage by a landrover to remove almost all lichen growth that has taken a long time to form. The low growing heather is also damaged.
12	Damage from Tracked ATVs	A single pass by a tracked ATV severely damages all vegetation it passes over. Such a journey may cross several miles of vegetation leaving such damage in its wake. Repeated passes lead to the development of eroding tracks. If heavy rain occurs soon after this single pass, the vegetation may not recover fully at all.
13	Tracking on Morven, Deeside	Landrovers are now used to travel over large areas without use of tracks. This causes bare ground to develop and vegetation is destroyed, and the subsequent erosion of fine material leads to a rough surface. The drivers then drive to the side, causing more damage and hence eroding, multiple tracking develops over long stretches of hill.
14	Multiple tracking on Pressendye Hill Deeside	This is a further example of that seen in photo 13. Note the further tracks on the far left of the photo. The peaty podzol soils in which this is done are particularly vulnerable to damage of this kind.
15	Track on Culblean Hill, Deeside	Example of an extensive track several miles long created simply by driving over peaty podzol soils until a track is worn into place there, and then dumping hardcore on top. The kind of track it is layed over can be seen at the right hand side.
	Same track as in 15	End of area topped with hardcore. Track continues as left by landrovers and ready for further hardcore to be deposited to extend it.

Table 1 Continued