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21 April 2009

Dear Sara

National Park Local Plan Affordable Housing Policy 21 - Objection 446(b)

I refer to your letter of 9 April 2009 requesting a view on proposed policy amendments and a response to the Statements of Case for the National park Authority.

The Statement of Case for the Cairngorms National Park Authority refers to the changes proposed for Policy 21 and contained in Core Document 7.28 page 43. It indicates that these changes will go forward as post inquiry modifications.

These changes go a long way towards meeting the concerns which caused Rothiemurchus Estate to object to the original Policy 21 wording. They simplify the way that the target for affordable housing will be sought and make it sufficiently flexible to deal with economic constraints.

It is indicated in the conclusions to the Rothiemurchus Statement of Case that Policy 21 should also be flexible in social terms to allow for the ability to consider the proportion of affordable housing at each stage of the An Camas Mòr new community to enable it to become a balanced community. By balanced community, in addition to providing the commercial and community uses indicated in paragraph (iv) of the An Camas Mòr Policy in the Strategic Settlements section of the Deposit Local Plan, the intention is for a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures. This will allow the new community to provide for first time buyers, those renting from social landlords, those being assisted with supported purchase, those wishing to self build in partnership or with assistance, and those who wish to buy or rent in the open market. It will not be skewed to any one particular sector when it is fully developed although there may be an emphasis on a greater than average proportion of affordable housing at each phase of development. At its completion date the new community should have about 25% affordable housing to secure this balance and ensure its economic and social success.

To meet this concern Policy 21 in CD7.28 should be amended to read “The proportion of affordable units sought will be to a target of between 25% and 40% depending on the types of affordable housing required and the economic viability and social balance of the development. The Planning Authority may accept a contribution of less than 25% where it is clear that an affordable housing contribution of 25% or more would adversely affect the economic viability or social balance of the development”

If the Cairngorms National Park Authority re-word Policy 21 in this way then the objection can be withdrawn.

Yours sincerely

Howard Brindley