

**Ballater, Stathdon, Mid Deeside and Cromar**  
**Wednesday 2nd November, 7pm**  
**Mike Sheridan Room**  
**Victoria and Albert Halls, Ballater**

**Main points from the National Parks Outcomes**  
**(Main bullet points taken from the discussion)**

**Outcome 6**

*The economy of the Park will have grown and diversified, drawing on the Park's special qualities*

- Talking about new businesses, but key to the areas are land-based businesses in particular farming, there needs to be support for this sector.
- Glad that there is better signage on the motorways signposting people to the East side of the Park.
- Would be good to have foreign language training courses to support the local tourism industry.
- Planning restrictions make things difficult for new businesses, there is very little land for development, needs to be more flexibility. High rates for businesses also make things difficult.
- Three business premises are empty at the moment in Ballater, very difficult economic climate. Planning restrictions need to be lifted.
- No land all tied up for the next 5/10 years, and what there is very expensive. Everything at a standstill stops Ballater from developing being sustainable.
- Create opportunities for young people, training is all very well but there have to be jobs that go with that. Need to create new jobs (and not jobs that take away from existing ones).
- What is happening to improve IT? (new initiatives are being developed in the medium term: local authorities and enterprise companies leading)
- Businesses need to know what support and information is out there for them.

**Outcome 9**

*The Park's communities will be more empowered and able to develop their own models of sustainability.*

- The Ballater One Voice Our Future Group (BOVOF) is encouraging the idea of a new trust. A better framework for people to influence the building of affordable housing in Ballater. Housing for young people/families etc. Would like to see more support, direction and facilitation from the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) in this.
- Too many layers of community support agencies.
- Difficult to get people involved (particularly young people)
- Planning policies that underpin housing policies... do they really support affordable housing? Are the two things in step? Affordable housing is not realistic for most

salaries in the Park (an issue across Scotland). The national park is a good place for communities and agencies to work together to address affordable housing issues.

- The empowerment of communities to develop their own models of sustainability is vital before they start building houses.
- Need to look at businesses (projects like the Old School in Ballater)
- Do not need to build your own house, rented housing is also affordable. Encourage developers to build housing for rent.

### **Main points from the Local Development Plan (Main Issues Report) (Main bullet points taken from the discussion)**

#### **Option3**

**Support for Communities-** *create opportunities for the right range and choice of facilities, provided in the right place to help support our communities.*

- The main facility in Ballater is the Victoria and Albert Halls. How can the CNPA get people involved? There are 1600 people in Ballater. There is a problem getting people involved...too much apathy and TV.
- If we want to attract jobs we have to ask what is it that we have got? Who are the visitors that we want to attract? This drives the question: what facilities do we need? How do we attract young people? Where are the big business opportunities?
- On the issue of apathy the Deeside Donside Development Manager works in communities to help move things forward, where volunteers are over stretched. His support is useful and helps support community priorities (can also result on creating jobs) the post is funded by the CNPA, Aberdeenshire Council and Leader.
- Nowhere for small businesses to grow (storage and premises)

#### **Option 4**

**Housing/Affordable Housing-***create opportunities for new housing that supports our local communities needs.*

- There is a bias to promote affordable housing in the Park, is there the money to build it? Need to also think about private, main stream housing options. Market conditions are keeping things static.
- No affordable housing has been built in Ballater for the last 10 years. There is a stranglehold on the HI site with the developer due to the economic climate.
- Planners too controlling in telling people what should be built. Design is not moving on. There is a tension between traditional design and what is best for the site (need to keep a better balance) The CNPA does support innovative, good quality design.
- Need a mix of housing types and tenures.
- Ballater conservation area, do the people get a say if they do not want that?
- Important that if the development plan says that 25% will be the affordable housing percentage then it sticks to that as a certainty.

- There is no money now for development but there may be in the future.
- How do you decide what is affordable? It is variable, based on the relationship between wages and housing prices in the area. (changes depending on the area) Affordable housing looks to abstract a subsidy from the developer (this makes it more affordable) Housing Authorities would like to do more but do not have the money. This also relates to rented accommodation.
- For 2/3 years we have been discussing the 250 houses on the HI site? Who decided that we needed 250 houses for housing in Ballater? The 250 houses comes from the negotiations between the land owner and the developer (and relates to the size of the site) Is 25% the need for affordable housing in Ballater? The market seems to drive this not the specific need.
- Young people need us to keep affordable housing on the agenda.
- The Masterplan should be broken down into smaller phases so progress can be made more easily.
- Important for communities to have land set aside for controlled (not uncontrolled development)

### **Option 6**

**Support for Rural Areas-** create a flexible framework for growth in our rural areas that meet their individual needs.

- Flexibility is key, especially in stretched out communities such as Strathdon.
- Large amounts of singles houses are being built in very rural areas in the Park, not the same for Ballater?
- Does the CNPA encourage rural housing? Needs to be more flexible in this area.