

Date:			
Issue:	Policy 33 Tourism Development		
Objector(s):		Objection ref:	
	James and Evelyn Sunley		056a
	Scottish Council for National Parks		434l

Reporter	Mrs Jill Moody
Procedure	Informal Hearing

1.0 Overview

- 1.1 This statement sets out the CNPA response to the objections raised to the Deposit Local Plan, as modified, in respect of Policy 33 Tourism Development and supplements the response made to those objections by the CNPA in its report to Committee (CD7.3, 4 and 5). It recommends no further modification is made to the Plan in respect of this policy.

2.0 Provision of the Local Plan

- 2.1 Policy 33 Tourism Development supports the development of tourism-related facilities/attractions, where they enhance the range and quality of provision, and/or lengthen the tourist season, have a beneficial impact on the local economy and do not have any adverse impact on the special qualities of the National Park.
- 2.2 All proposals should contribute to the development and protection of sustainable communities and maintain and enhance the quality of the visitor's experience. Any proposal which would reduce the tourist facilities of an area will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the planning authority that the effects will not have an adverse impact on the sustainability of the surrounding community.
- 2.3 The policy reflects the importance placed on tourism, recognised as one of the key economic drivers within the National Park. The creation, maintenance and promotion of a healthy tourism industry are vital to the area, its communities, and also to achieving the aims of the Park. The key to the success of sustainable tourism within the Park is the ability to deliver a high quality experience in an increasingly competitive global market, whilst maintaining the special qualities of the area. The policy encourages tourism developments which relate to these special qualities, maintain and enhance the range and quality of visitor attractions and facilities, attracts more visitors to the area, encourages them to stay longer, and meets their needs and aspirations.
- 2.4 The Policy and background text have been modified in the 1st modifications of the Deposit Local Plan with additional and altered wording, to include reference to supporting facilities, omit the requirement for justification based on specific industry standards and makes mention of where a reduction in current provision is satisfactory.

3.0 Summary of objection(s)

- 3.1 The 2 objections to Policy 33 cover the following issues:
- The local plan should include more detailed policies to support industrial and tourist development to create sustainable full time employment. **056a**
 - The policies do not look at the wide range of recreational activities or demonstrate a clear understanding of the impact such development has on both visitors and environment. A

statement of intent to develop informally presented educational opportunities which go beyond the physical provision and management of facilities on the ground would be appropriate here. The underlying approach to sustainability is supported. **4341**

4.0 Summary of Cairngorms National Park Authority Response

- 4.1 The broad aims of the policy are the promotion, protection and enhancement of tourism-related facilities; it is considered that sufficient scope is provided to assess proposals, positively and flexibly, encouraging tourist development. The policy has been worded to give positive support to tourism developments recognising the benefits to the local economy and communities, particularly where they enhance the range of facilities provided. The modifications have endeavoured to ensure a more appropriate balance is struck between development opportunities for business and tourism and the protection of the special qualities of the area as identified as a National Park. The creation of a world class National Park is key to the vision of the National Park and is stated throughout both the National Park Plan and Local Plan.
- 4.2 It is considered that the policy as worded is suitable in that it provides clarity, appropriate levels of guidance and reflects the importance placed upon tourism within the National Park. No further modifications are therefore proposed.

5.0 CNPA Recommendation

- 5.1 The CNPA recommend to the Reporter that the objections to the issues are rejected. The policy is intended to positively guide proposals for tourism-related development, realising the need for sustainable tourism and the protection of the special qualities of the area but which recognises the economic importance of tourism to the Park, its communities and at a national level. The policy is worded appropriately for the protection and enhancement of tourism-related facilities; it is considered that sufficient scope is provided to assess proposals, positively and flexibly, encouraging tourist development. No modification is therefore proposed.

6.0 Assessment / Scope of Evidence

- 6.1 **056a** We are disappointed that the CNPA have not taken the opportunity in the Local Plan to bring forward policies and proposals for the encouragement and development of industrial and tourist based enterprises to create sustainable full time employment.
- 6.2 **Response:** The broad aims of the policy are the promotion, protection and enhancement of tourism-related facilities; it is considered that sufficient scope is provided to assess proposals, positively and flexibly, encouraging tourist development. Additional land has been included for employment and tourism uses, and the text amended to reflect the importance of securing employment uses and the diversification of the rural economy within the National Park. The CNPA recognise the paramount importance of rural diversity to the Park's economy, the promotion of sustainable economic and social development is the 4th aim of the National Park and is reflected in other Local Plan policies such as policy 27 Business Development.
- 6.3 The modifications have endeavoured to ensure a more appropriate balance is struck between development opportunities for business and tourism and the protection of the special qualities of the area as identified as a National Park. The wording of policy 33 would therefore support appropriately sited and designed development.

- 6.4 **4341 Tourism** - In the event this section deals only with the physical planning aspect of recreation provision, despite its title giving the impression of a wide ranging discourse on types and character of acceptable recreational activities and how understanding of their use will be of direct benefit both to visitors and to maintaining the quality of the national park environment. A statement of intent to develop informally presented educational opportunities which go beyond the physical provision and management of facilities on the ground would be appropriate here.
- 6.5 **Response:** The Plan positively promotes a sustainable approach to providing for access and recreational opportunities and education. The Plan recognises the need to protect the Park's special qualities and promote responsible behaviour, through the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, Cairngorms Sustainable Tourism Strategy and the Outdoor Access Strategy.
- 6.6 The wording used within this policy has been reworded and clarified to ensure the appropriate level of guidance is available for developers and other users and that the Plan is easy to understand and use together with ensuring the appropriate level of protection and compliance with national and international obligations placed on the CNPA. The policy expects all tourism development to make a contribute to the vision of a world-class tourist destination, promoting a sustainable approach to developing tourism, with significantly enhanced awareness and understanding of the National Park, its special qualities and management needs. The impact of development on natural heritage, visitor experience and appropriate facilities will be considered under various the policies of the plan. No modification is considered necessary as a result of this representation.

7.0 Strategic Issues

- 7.1 The National Park Plan 2007 (CD7.1) provides a number of strategic objectives based around the enjoyment and understanding of the special qualities of the area; including raising awareness of the Park as a premier, year-round, rural tourism destination, developing a wide range of opportunities and improving and maintaining the quality of the experience for all visitors. The vision of the Cairngorms National Park is to develop a world-class destination which complements its outstanding environment and outdoor recreation opportunities and plays a part in the regional and national tourism economy. The National Park Plan identifies the fact that tourism accounts directly and indirectly for a significant part of the area's economy.

8.0 Other material considerations

- Scottish Outdoor Access Code

9.0 List of documents (including Core Documents)

- CD1.3 The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000
- CD7.1 Cairngorms National Park Plan 2007
- CD7.3 CNPA Committee Report Deposit Local Plan May 2007
- CD7.4 CNPA Committee Report 1st Modifications October 2008
- CD7.5 CNPA Committee Report 2nd Modifications February 2009
- CD8.6 Scottish Outdoor Access Code
- CD7.13 Cairngorms Sustainable Tourism Strategy
- CD7.11 Outdoor Access Strategy

10.0 Cairngorms National Park Authority Witnesses for Formal Hearing

- Robert Grant – Planning Officer