

Date:			
Issue:	Aviemore AV/ EDI – Economic Development Allocation		
Objector:	Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group	Objection ref(s):	400i(c)

Reporter	Mrs Jill Moody
Procedure	Informal Hearing

1.0 Overview

- 1.1 This statement sets out the CNPA's position in relation to objections raised to the Deposit Local Plan, as modified, in respect of the Economic Development Allocation AV/EDI: Dalfaber Industrial Estate, Aviemore and supplements the response made to those objections by the CNPA in its report to Committee (CD7.3, 4 and 5). It recommends a minor modification is made to the Plan in respect of this policy.

2.0 Provision of the Local Plan:

- 2.1 The Local Plan (CD6.11) allocates strategic development sites within the settlement proposals section; these include land for Economic Development. The Local Plan recognises the importance of existing businesses and business sites to the Cairngorms National Park and its communities. The plan text specifies:

AV/EDI: The existing Dalfaber Industrial Estate and Cairngorm Technology Park provide opportunities for economic development proposals to support the economy of Aviemore and the surrounding area. An area of 0.5Ha to the north of Dalfaber Industrial Estate is included to allow for future expansion. Currently used for informal recreation, pedestrian links through the site should be protected.

- 2.2 The text have been modified in the 1st modifications of the Deposit Local Plan with additional and altered wording, to include reference to informal recreation and pedestrian linkages. The site area has been reduced from the Consultative Draft Local Plan (CD6.9).

3.0 Summary of objections

- 3.1 The objection covers the following issues:

- This site contains a wide and excellent variety of habitats and species, and is also a high quality landscape and should not therefore be allocated for development. Its allocation would conflict with 3rd and 4th aims of the Park. **(428a)**

4.0 Summary of Cairngorms National Park Authority Response

- 4.1 The Local Plan aims to create economic opportunities to accommodate the needs of communities and plan for future growth, promoting sustainability in terms of both communities and the economy. The CNPA, in support of this establishes a number of objectives to improve opportunities for economic development within the Park, and the Local Plan approach must therefore be flexible enough to ensure that enterprise can occur in harmony with the important natural and cultural environment.

- 4.2 The CNPA have included a number of economic development opportunities in Aviemore, recognising the requirements of the 4th aim of the Park, the sustainable economic and social development of the areas communities, while the Park Plan seeks to create conditions conducive to business growth and investment that are consistent with the special qualities of the Park and its strategic location. The allocation should ensure that the existing business location is able to meet the anticipated changes in the economy and provide choice for a diverse range of economic developments, as required by SPP2 Economic Development. The planning system has an important enabling role in supporting business development and contributing to economic prosperity.
- 4.3 The Local Plan identifies the proposed site as a natural and inconspicuous extension to the existing Dalfaber Industrial Estate and Technology Park, allowing for its future expansion, as required, supporting the economic growth of the community. The area, as proposed, is not considered to have any detrimental impact on visual amenity, natural and cultural heritage or landscape of the area. The Local Plan acknowledges the sensitive position regarding the extent of the greater site, hence the considerable reduction in the extent of the area zoned from the Consultative Local Plan. While the site is considered appropriate for development, the footpath links and informal access and recreation opportunities remain an important consideration.

5.0 CNPA Recommendation

- 5.1 The CNPA recommend to the Reporter that the objection is rejected, however the proposals wording should be further modified to be consistent with AV/ED2 to include 'when the current site reaches capacity.' This allocation will provide additional opportunities for industrial/business development within Aviemore and the wider local area. Any proposals for development will be considered on their merits and judged against all policies in the Plan and if required, appropriate natural heritage surveys will be sought.

6.0 Assessment / Scope of Evidence

- 6.1 **400i(c)** This is an area of high quality environment. It is immediately adjacent to further extremely high quality examples of habitats associated with the burn and surrounding woodland. Two species of UK red listed vascular plants have been recorded on the site, one classed as endangered the other as vulnerable and a third may be present on the site. In addition to a high density of rabbits (prey for EPS wildcat) there is evidence of use of the site by brown hare. The site provides foraging habitat for bats, and otter signs have been found near the site.

There are excellent views of the hills from the site, and the site is an important part of this high quality landscape. Turning a superb piece of habitat for wildlife, landscape and recreation into an industrial unit conflicts with the 1st and 3rd and 4th aims of the Park. Development would impact on the quality of experience for users of the Speyside Way and would degrade views for passengers on both railway lines.

- 6.2 **Response:** The comments are noted. The Local Plan identifies the proposed site as a natural extension to the existing Dalfaber Industrial Estate and Technology Park, allowing for its future expansion as required, supporting the economic growth of the community. The site is of low habitat value – comprising poor grassland and scrub. The site is considered appropriate for development; however the footpath links and informal access and recreation opportunities remain an important consideration and should be retained as far as development will allow. Any proposals for development will be considered on their merits and judged against all policies in the Plan and if required, appropriate natural heritage surveys will be sought.

The wording used within this proposal has been reworded and clarified to ensure the appropriate level of guidance is available for developers, and the Plan is easy to understand and use together with the policies ensuring the appropriate level of protection and compliance with national and international obligations placed on the CNPA. 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 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. No modifications are therefore proposed.

7.0 Strategic issues

7.1 The National Park Plan 2007 (CD7.13) provides a number of strategic objectives, including Conserving and Enhancing the Park(5.1) – Landscape, Built and Historic Environment and Living and Working in the Park (5.2) – Sustainable Communities, and Economy and Employment. All new development and management of the landscapes and settlements within the Park should be based on a sound understanding of this natural and cultural heritage. In addition the Plan seeks to create conditions conducive to business growth and investment that are consistent with the special qualities of the Park and its strategic location.

8.0 Other material considerations

8.1 None

9.0 List of documents (including Core Documents)

- CD7.13 Cairngorms National Park Plan 2007
- CD1.3 The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000
- CD7.12 Cairngorms National Park Core Paths Plan
- CD6.9 Cairngorms National Park Local Plan Consultative Draft
- 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

10.0 Cairngorms National Park Authority Witnesses for Formal Hearing

- Robert Grant – Planning Officer