

Date:			
Issue:	Settlements - Ballater		
Objector(s):	Ballater & Crathie Community Council	Objection ref(s):	091a
	Phillip John Swan		462c
	Phillip John Swan		462f

Reporter	Mr Hugh Begg
Procedure	Hearing

1.0 Overview

- 1.1 This statement sets out the Cairngorms National Park Authority response to the objections raised to the Deposit Local Plan as modified in respect of Settlements – Ballater and supplements the response made to those objections by the Cairngorms National Park Authority in its report to Committee (CD7.3-7.5). No changes are proposed.

2.0 Provision of the Local Plan:

- 2.1 The Deposit Local Plan as modified makes a variety of provision for Ballater within the Strategic Settlements section. The Proposals Map and accompanying text provide H1 to the north east of Monaltrie Park as an opportunity for housing and mixed use land for the longer term to ensure a planned approach to development. The site has capacity for around 250 units with 90 being envisaged in the life of this Plan. The site has been subject to an Enquiry by Design workshop run by the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment involving the local community and other stakeholders. This process indicated a layout incorporating a variety of densities and designs and pockets of mixed uses to support the growth of sustainable communities, an approach supported in this Plan. The plan states the expectations of development in terms of its relationship with Monaltrie Park, links with the surrounding area and respect for the planned character of Ballater. The CNPA will work with the community, developers, and the Prince's Foundation to produce a masterplan. Part of the site lies within SEPA's indicative flood risk area and a detailed flood risk assessment will be required for proposals for the site. Provision is also made in ED 1- 3 for business opportunities and in ED4 scope for enhancement at the caravan and camping site. The old school C1 is protected for community use. The golf course, Monaltrie Park and recent woodland area north of Pannanich Road contribute to the setting of Ballater and will be protected from adverse development.

3.0 Summary of objection(s)

- 3.1 3 objections raising some 8 issues have been lodged on Settlements – Ballater:
- The plan focuses too heavily to housing provision and not enough on employment and infrastructure needed to provide infrastructure for housing development. Settlement boundary should include the Craighendarroch complex and the wooded area around the school. Omissions including battlefield site and souterrain. Crathie should be a settlement. The SEA must be more carefully examined as its findings will have a major impact. There are 4 conservation villages. Policy regarding flooding requires careful consideration to ensure that sites are not allocated in areas at risk and protection is included in all developments. Housing policies should reflect the important role retired people make to the economy and the value added to houses which could be used to support affordable houses. The work of the Prince's foundation should be better reflected. Additional thought is needed to ensure better provision for commercial development. Housing requirements for NEST reflect the actual need for Mar area and in turn for Ballater. Need greater clarify on how housing requirement for each area has been calculated.

Requirement for affordable housing to be mixed throughout development will affect value of open market houses. Should be better understanding of size requirements within communities and development should be in keeping with character and ensure that low cost and affordable are truly for local people and essential workers. Land should be allocated in Ballater for hotel and hostel accommodation. Proposals HI should include allocation for parking for Ballater Games and density should be adjusted to reflect this. Also need provision for recreation and social activities and a woodland project. Density of HI not in keeping with character of Ballater and not in line with Aberdeenshire Local Plan. Objection maintained to 1st mDLP. IN response to 2nd mDLP continue previous objections, still consider Craigendarroch complex as part of settlement, area between Monaltrie House and the first Scotia Homes development should be maintained as part of a “greenway” from Craigendarroch Hill to the Dee. Many in Ballater enjoying present size and ambience of the area strongly oppose further eastern enlargement. However a majority very much want to see established need for social and affordable housing to be fulfilled and a more balanced demographic community maintained. With present financial regime this requires private development at same time. Work of Prince’s Foundation for building offers a reasonable opportunity to discuss methods of retaining community cohesion and least removal of land from food production. Community Council wishes to see further discussion with CNPA on design guide and business opportunities in full consultation of plans by whole community. **(091a)**

- The proposed land area allocated for housing is around 11ha which is proposed for 250 houses. This would lead to a density of 10 houses per acre. The individual plot areas would be further reduced by the need for enhanced amenity spaces and additional parking for Monaltrie Park. This implies a high percentage of relatively modest affordable homes which would be housing people for whom there would be limited employment opportunities in Ballater leading to serious unemployment and social problems. Reduce land allocated to only the field to north east of Monaltrie Park which should be sufficient for up to 100 affordable homes or find other solutions such as intelligent infill and upgrading/conversion of existing properties. Maintain objections to 1st mDLP. In response to 2nd mDLP supports statement in Policy 21 that development solely for affordable housing will be favourably considered, but only if accompanied by withdrawal of site HI. If HI is retained then object to this statement as it implies the building of public sector housing would be additional to site HI. Urges more creative energy devoted to addressing real housing issue which confronts Ballater which is affordable housing for local people. **(462c)**
- Concern over housing closing off access routes for wildlife, especially deer, between Craigendarroch Hill and the fields bordering the route of the old railway line. Concern that changes of this nature will not comply with the 1st aim of the Park. Reduce target of 250 houses to max 50 and seek to satisfy this requirement by infill development and upgrade/conversion of existing properties. **(462f)**

4.0 Summary of Cairngorms National Park Authority Response

- 4.1 The CNPA has identified Ballater as a strategic settlement. The Cairngorms Landscape Capacity for Housing Study 2005 (CD7.19) considered Ballater and the analysis of the village clearly demonstrates that the boundaries shown in the Deposit Local Plan are appropriate. Craigendarroch Hill is such a strong and dominant feature that the hotel complex on its northern side is physically divorced from the core of the village. It would not be appropriate to include it within the settlement as defined although it does of course have a strong practical relationship with it as do other elements of the surrounding area. It is the largest village in the eastern side of the National Park and as such is the proper location for allocations to contribute to the future housing needs of the area. Land is also allocated in Braemar. Topic Paper 3

“Approach to Housing Land Supply and Affordable Housing” (CD7.23) explains the background to the provision of housing land within the Park and the basis for the allocations. The most recent analysis indicates a need in Upper Deeside for 29 affordable houses a year. Between Ballater and Braemar the plan provides for 130 housing units total in the plan period to meet the needs of the growing number of households, to contribute to the affordable housing requirement and ensure a long term demographically balanced community in Ballater. It is noted that Scottish Enterprise Grampian, although their objection has since been withdrawn, were concerned that the allocations are not sufficient and are of the view that employment follows housing provision. Following the Aberdeenshire Local Plan Inquiry, the adopted Aberdeenshire Local Plan 2006 makes provision for a future undefined area of housing land in Ballater in the general location of HI in the DLP. The Cairngorms Landscape Capacity for Housing Study 2005 considered Ballater and identified HI as having potential for development with buildings concentrated towards the south and woodland to the north. The Prince’s Foundation held a 3 day Enquiry by Design workshop in November 2006 which was attended by representatives of the Community Council, Ballater and Royal Deeside, CNPA, Aberdeenshire Council and others. This was the first stage in an ongoing process and it is understood that TPF wish to return later in 2009 to take the work forward. The Summary Report of the Ballater Enquiry by Design November 2006 (CD8.8) explains the process in full and the Deposit Local Plan reflects what was coming out of the work. The proposals in the mDLP are considered to be consistent with these two pieces of work and allow for the proper planning of Ballater’s long term growth via a masterplanning process rather than the more ad hoc approach of the past. This will allow continuity, early establishment of long term landscaping requirements, and a planned approach to integrating future development with the historic core of the village. The area allocated is intended to provide for a range of needs for the community, including housing, business and recreation. This will facilitate the achievement of high quality and consistent design, the full range of sustainability measures and provision for biodiversity throughout the development. The period covered by this plan allows for 90 units and monitoring of its implementation plus preparation of the new Local Development Plan will allow the situation to be kept under ongoing review. No further modifications are proposed.

5.0 CNPA Commendation to Reporter

- 5.1 It is commended to the Reporter that the objections to Settlements – Ballater as listed above are rejected. No issues are raised that could lead the Cairngorms National Park Authority to consider the approach deficient.

6.0 Strategic issues

- 6.1 None other than as identified in the Topic Paper 3 “Approach to Housing Land Supply and Affordable Housing” (CD7.23)

7.0 Other material considerations

- 7.1 The Summary Report of the Ballater Enquiry by Design November 2006 (CD8.8)

8.0 Assessment / Scope of Evidence

- 8.1 **(091a)** Objection: Objects, the plan focuses too heavily to housing provision and not enough on employment and infrastructure needed to provide infrastructure for housing development. Settlement boundary should include the Craighendarroch complex and the wooded area around the school. Omissions including battlefield site and souterrain. Crathie should be a settlement.

The SEA must be more carefully examined as its findings will have a major impact. There are 4 conservation villages. Policy regarding flooding requires careful consideration to ensure that sites are not allocated in areas at risk and protection is included in all developments. Housing policies should reflect the important role retired people make to the economy and the value added to houses which could be used to support affordable houses. The work of the Prince's foundation should be better reflected. Additional thought is needed to ensure better provision for commercial development. Housing requirements for NEST reflect the actual need for Mar area and in turn for Ballater. Need greater clarity on how housing requirement for each area has been calculated. Requirement for affordable housing to be mixed throughout development will affect value of open market houses. Should be better understanding of size requirements within communities and development should be in keeping with character and ensure that low cost and affordable are truly for local people and essential workers. Land should be allocated in Ballater for hotel and hostel accommodation. Proposals HI should include allocation for parking for Ballater Games and density should be adjusted to reflect this. Also need provision for recreation and social activities and a woodland project. Density of HI not in keeping with character of Ballater and not in line with Aberdeenshire Local Plan. Objection maintained to 1st mDLP. In response to 2nd mDLP continue previous objections, still consider Craigendarroch complex as part of settlement, area between Monaltrie House and the first Scotia Homes development should be maintained as part of a "greenway" from Craigendarroch Hill to the Dee. Many in Ballater enjoying present size and ambience of the area strongly oppose further eastern enlargement. However a majority very much want to see established need for social and affordable housing to be fulfilled and a more balanced demographic community maintained. With present financial regime this requires private development at same time. Work of Prince's Foundation for building offers a reasonable opportunity to discuss methods of retaining community cohesion and least removal of land from food production. Community Council wishes to see further discussion with CNPA on design guide and business opportunities in full consultation of plans by whole community.

8.2 **Response:** The CNPA has identified Ballater as a strategic settlement. The Cairngorms Landscape Capacity for Housing Study 2005(CD7.19) considered Ballater and the analysis of the village clearly demonstrates that the boundaries shown in the Deposit Local Plan are appropriate. Craigendarroch Hill is such a strong and dominant feature that the hotel complex on its northern side is physically divorced from the core of the village. It would not be appropriate to include it within the settlement as defined although it does of course have a strong practical relationship with it as do other elements of the surrounding area. Crathie is not designated as a strategic, intermediate or rural settlement for the purposes of this plan. This does not mean that it does not have a role to play, but is a reflection of its dispersed character and the fact that other policies in the plan offer significant potential for development to meet its needs whilst respecting its character. With regard to the SEA, the 4 statutory consultees have commented on the clarity and soundness of the environmental report. Ballater is the largest village in the eastern side of the National Park and as such is the proper location for allocations to contribute to the future housing needs of the area. Land is also allocated in Braemar. Topic Paper 3 "Approach to Housing Land Supply and Affordable Housing" (CD7.23) explains the background to the provision of housing land within the Park and the basis for the allocations. The most recent analysis indicates a need in Upper Deeside for 29 affordable houses a year. Between Ballater and Braemar the plan provides for 130 housing units total in the plan period to meet the needs of the growing number of households, to contribute to the affordable housing requirement and ensure a long term demographically balanced community in Ballater. It is noted that Scottish Enterprise Grampian, although their objection has since been withdrawn, were concerned that the allocations are not sufficient and are of the view that employment follows housing provision. Following the Aberdeenshire Local Plan Inquiry, the adopted Aberdeenshire

Local Plan 2006 makes provision for a future undefined area of housing land in Ballater in the general location of HI in the DLP. The Cairngorms Landscape Capacity for Housing Study 2005 considered Ballater and identified HI as having potential for development with buildings concentrated towards the south and woodland to the north. The Prince's Foundation held a 3 day Enquiry by Design workshop in November 2006 which was attended by representatives of the Community Council, Ballater and Royal Deeside, CNPA, Aberdeenshire Council and others. This was the first stage in an ongoing process and it is understood that TPF wish to return later in 2009 to take the work forward. The Summary Report of the Ballater Enquiry by Design November 2006 (CD8.8) explains the process in full and the Deposit Local Plan reflects what was coming out of this work. The proposals in the mDLP are considered to be consistent with these two pieces of work and allow for the proper planning of Ballater's long term growth via a masterplanning process rather than the more ad hoc approach of the past. This will allow continuity, early establishment of long term landscaping requirements, and a planned approach to integrating future development with the historic core of the village. The area allocated in the mDLP is intended to provide for a range of needs for the community, including housing, business and recreation. This will facilitate the achievement of high quality and consistent design, the full range of sustainability measures and provision for biodiversity throughout the development. The period covered by this plan allows for 90 units and monitoring of its implementation plus preparation of the new Local Development Plan will allow the situation to be kept under ongoing review. The figure of 250 houses is the longer term capacity and reflects the work of the Prince's Foundation following an analysis of existing densities. The mDLP also identifies other sites for economic development and the policies in the plan offer significant potential for a range of opportunities that respect the character of the village. The Community Council will be involved in the preparation of a masterplan and any relevant supplementary planning guidance. The CNPA is currently involved in and is supporting the Ballater One Voice Our Future Group which is in the course of preparing an action plan that will reflect a wide range of needs for the community, including housing. This is an ongoing project and the outcomes will inform the implementation of this plan and the preparation of the new Local Development Plan. No further modifications are proposed

8.3 **(462c) Objection:** Objects as the proposed land area allocated for housing is around 11ha which is proposed for 250 houses. This would lead to a density of 10 houses per acre. The individual plot areas would be further reduced by the need for enhanced amenity spaces and additional parking for Monaltrie Park. This implies a high percentage of relatively modest affordable homes which would be housing people for whom there would be limited employment opportunities in Ballater leading to serious unemployment and social problems. Reduce land allocated to only the field to north east of Monaltrie Park which should be sufficient for up to 100 affordable homes or find other solutions such as intelligent infill and upgrading/conversion of existing properties. Maintain objections to 1st mDLP. In response to 2nd mDLP supports statement in Policy 21 that development solely for affordable housing will be favourably considered, but only if accompanied by withdrawal of site HI. If HI is retained then object to this statement as it implies the building of public sector housing would be additional to site HI. Urges more creative energy devoted to addressing real housing issue which confronts Ballater which is affordable housing for local people.

8.4 **Response:** The CNPA has identified Ballater as a strategic settlement. The Cairngorms Landscape Capacity for Housing Study 2005 (CD7.19) considered Ballater and the analysis of the village clearly demonstrates that the boundaries shown in the Deposit Local Plan are appropriate. Craigendarroch Hill is such a strong and dominant feature that the hotel complex on its northern side is physically divorced from the core of the village. It would not be appropriate to include it within the settlement as defined although it does of course have a strong practical

relationship with it as do other elements of the surrounding area. Crathie is not designated as a strategic, intermediate or rural settlement for the purposes of this plan. This does not mean that it does not have a role to play, but is a reflection of its dispersed character and the fact that other policies in the plan offer significant potential for development to meet its needs whilst respecting its character. With regard to the SEA, the 4 statutory consultees have commented on the clarity and soundness of the environmental report. Ballater is the largest village in the eastern side of the National Park and as such is the proper location for allocations to contribute to the future housing needs of the area. Land is also allocated in Braemar. Topic Paper 3 “Approach to Housing Land Supply and Affordable Housing” (CD7.23) explains the background to the provision of housing land within the Park and the basis for the allocations. The most recent analysis indicates a need in Upper Deeside for 29 affordable houses a year. Between Ballater and Braemar the plan provides for 130 housing units total in the plan period to meet the needs of the growing number of households, to contribute to the affordable housing requirement and ensure a long term demographically balanced community in Ballater. It is noted that Scottish Enterprise Grampian, although their objection has since been withdrawn, were concerned that the allocations are not sufficient and are of the view that employment follows housing provision. Following the Aberdeenshire Local Plan Inquiry, the adopted Aberdeenshire Local Plan 2006 makes provision for a future undefined area of housing land in Ballater in the general location of HI in the DLP. The Cairngorms Landscape Capacity for Housing Study 2005 considered Ballater and identified HI as having potential for development with buildings concentrated towards the south and woodland to the north. The Prince’s Foundation held a 3 day Enquiry by Design workshop in November 2006 which was attended by representatives of the Community Council, Ballater and Royal Deeside, CNPA, Aberdeenshire Council and others. This was the first stage in an ongoing process and it is understood that TPF wish to return later in 2009 to take the work forward. The Summary Report of the Ballater Enquiry by Design November 2006 (CD8.8) explains the process in full and the Deposit Local Plan reflects what was coming out of this work. The proposals in the mDLP are considered to be consistent with these two pieces of work and allow for the proper planning of Ballater’s long term growth via a masterplanning process rather than the more ad hoc approach of the past. This will allow continuity, early establishment of long term landscaping requirements, and a planned approach to integrating future development with the historic core of the village. The area allocated in the mDLP is intended to provide for a range of needs for the community, including housing, business and recreation. This will facilitate the achievement of high quality and consistent design, the full range of sustainability measures and provision for biodiversity throughout the development. The period covered by this plan allows for 90 units and monitoring of its implementation plus preparation of the new Local Development Plan will allow the situation to be kept under ongoing review. The figure of 250 houses is the longer term capacity and reflects the work of the Prince’s Foundation following an analysis of existing densities. The mDLP also identifies other sites for economic development and the policies in the plan offer significant potential for a range of opportunities that respect the character of the village. Please refer to evidence on Policy 21 for the justification for that policy as revised. It is not possible or desirable to withdraw HI as it is demonstrably necessary to contribute to the delivery of housing and other community needs within this plan period and beyond. Finally, reference is made to use of infill sites in lieu of the allocation. The mDLP does not preclude the use of such sites so long as they comply with relevant policies in the plan, but as there is no certainty as to their availability or capacity they are not effective and must be considered as windfall over and above allocated provision within the plan. No further modifications are proposed.

- 8.5 **(462f)** Objection: Objects, concern over housing closing off access routes for wildlife, especially deer, between Craigenarroch Hill and the fields bordering the route of the old railway line. Concern that changes of this nature will not comply with the 1st aim of the Park. Reduce target

of 250 houses to max 50 and seek to satisfy this requirement by infill development and upgrade/conversion of existing properties.

8.6 Response: The area allocated in the mDLP is intended to provide for a range of needs for the community, including housing, business and recreation. This will facilitate the achievement of high quality and consistent design, the full range of sustainability measures and provision for biodiversity throughout the development. The latter in particular will include provision for habitat and wildlife networks within the planned development. Other recent developments have not inhibited movement of deer and other species. Finally, reference is made to use of infill sites in lieu of the allocation. The mDLP does not preclude the use of such sites so long as they comply with relevant policies in the plan, but as there is no certainty as to their availability or capacity they are not effective and must be considered as windfall over and above allocated provision within the plan. No further modifications are proposed.

9.0 Conclusions

9.1 It is commended to the Reporter that the objections to Settlements – Ballater as listed above are rejected. No issues are raised that could lead the Cairngorms National Park Authority to consider the approach deficient.

10.0 List of documents (including Core Documents)

- CD6.13 Deposit Local Plan following 2nd Modifications
- CD7.3-7.5 CNPA Committee Reports
- CD8.8 The Princes Foundation for the Built Environment – Ballater Summary Report Enquiry by Design 2006
- CD7.23 Topic Paper 3 “Approach to Housing Land Supply and Affordable Housing”
- CD7.19 The Cairngorms Landscape Capacity for Housing Study 2005
- CD7.1 Cairngorms National Park Plan
- CD6.5 Aberdeenshire Local Plan

11.0 Cairngorms National Park Authority Witnesses for Formal Inquiry

- Don McKee – Head of Planning