

Date :			
Issue:	Requests to allocate additional land in Dulnain Bridge		
Objector(s):	Seafield Estate	Objection ref(s):	455b

Reporter :	Mrs. Jill Moody
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 a request by Seafield Estate to allocate additional land for housing adjacent to Dulnain Bridge. It supplements the response made to that objection by the CNPA in its report to Committee (CD 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5). It recommends that the identified settlement boundary and extent of land allocated for housing on proposal sites DB/H1 and DB/H2 be confirmed. This statement does not recommend any further modifications.

2.0 Provision of the Local Plan

- 2.1 Dulnain Bridge is identified as an Intermediate Settlement. The Deposit Local Plan proposes allocating DB/H1 and DB/H2 specifically for housing development.

DB/H1 is a 1.51Ha field to the west of the play area and would be suitable for the development of around 30 dwellings.

DB/H2 is adjacent to the A938 and the site has an extant planning permission for 10 dwellings. Any future development proposals for the site are required to protect the marshland area within the site.

- 2.2 Associated policies :
- Table 2-4 - Housing land requirement and supply
 - Policy 18 - Design Standards for Development
 - Policy 22 – Housing Development within Settlements

3.0 Summary of Objection

- 3.1 One objection have been received covering the following :
- Objecting to the non allocation of land in Dulnain Bridge for residential use (**455b**).

4.0 Summary of Cairngorms National Park Authority Response

- 4.1 The objection requesting the allocation of additional lands for residential development in Dulnain Bridge have been analysed by the CNPA. The analysis has been linked to the need for housing land within the area, and the effectiveness of the sites included within in the deposit plan. The sites have also been judged against the findings of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (CD7.14, 7.15 and 7.16), the physical constraints of the sites and the requirements for the effectiveness as set out in national guidance. Having assessed all of the sites a review was undertaken of the alternative land suggested in Dulnain Bridge to ascertain its qualities in meeting the local housing need. The impact it would have was then assessed through the SEA. The CNPA have identified housing sites in Dulnain Bridge to contribute to the housing land supply set out in proposed modifications to Table 3 and 4 (CD7.28), and these have been assessed through the site selection criteria set out in Topic Paper 4 (CD7.24). As part of the overall strategy Dulnain Bridge is considered to have the capacity to accommodate the provision of land for

housing growth to meet the social and economic needs of the local area and the extent of land allocated is sufficient for housing. Any alternative suggestions for additional land will be considered in a later review of the Plan.

5.0 CNPA Commendation to Reporter

- 5.1 The Cairngorms National Park Authority commend to the Reporter that the objection detailed above is rejected and that acceptance is confirmed of the extent of the housing allocations proposed in Dulnain Bridge.
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6.0 Assessment / Scope of Evidence

- 6.1 The objection received is on the basis of the non-allocation of land in Dulnain Bridge for residential development.
- 6.2 **455b** objects to the Local Plan on the basis that there are additional opportunities for housing at Dulnain Bridge which have not been identified. **455b** suggests that the land offers a logical extension to the village and that additional residential development will help sustain existing rural services and provide new housing opportunities within the existing settlement. Consequently, **455b** requests that the Plan is modified to include additional land and the allocation of this land for housing.
- 6.3 **Response** : The land which the objectors wish to have allocated for residential development adjoins proposed allocation site DB/H1 and extends eastwards to the rear of the former outdoor centre and includes frontage onto either side of the A938 public road which leads from the A95 trunk road into the settlement of Dulnain Bridge. The Local Plan does not include within the settlement boundary any of the land suggested by objector **455b**.
- 6.4 The CNP Local Plan, in line with SPP3 – Planning for Housing (CD2.4), and the objectives of the CNP Park Plan (CD7.1) is required to deliver effective housing land for the Local Plan period on the basis of the housing needs established for the area (see proposed modified background text to Housing policies CD7.28). This is further clarified through Topic Paper 3 Approach to Housing Land Supply and Affordable Housing (CD7.23). The development strategy, as defined in Housing Policy 22 (Page 45) and explained at paragraph 5.52, seeks to allow for new housing development within the settlements of the National Park. The housing allocations in the CNP Local Plan for Dulnain Bridge have been made in this context. Proposal sites DB/H1 and DB/H2 have been allocated in the adopted Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan (CD6.6) for residential purposes (and DB/H2 also has Planning Committee approval for housing development). The allocated lands are considered to be effective. There is no justification for additional allocations in terms of the housing needs studies. Paragraph 7.5 (Page 61) of the Cairngorm National Park Local Plan states that the settlement plans identify settlement boundaries. Outwith settlement boundaries, other policies apply and this is the mechanism for assessing development proposals in such areas. It would be inappropriate at this point in time to expand the settlement boundary for Dulnain Bridge to facilitate the allocation of additional unneeded housing land. No further modifications are therefore justified.
- 6.5 Paragraph 5.41 of the Local Plan confirms the approach that has been taken in the allocation of sites, where it is intended to create a balance of development opportunities within the Park, in order to allow for a variety of scales of development to meet local needs. In the context of the limited scale of the existing settlement area of Dulnain Bridge, the sites identified for housing are

considered to be sufficient in facilitating the level of development which is appropriate and necessary for Dulnain Bridge in the five year lifetime of the Plan. In addition, Policy 22 – ‘Housing Development within Settlement Boundaries’ also provides opportunities for housing development on land within the settlement which is not specifically allocated for housing, but which is “compatible with existing and adjacent land uses and comprises infilling, conversion, small scale development, the use of derelict or underused land or the redevelopment of land.” Given the variety of opportunities which exist for the provision of housing within the proposed settlement boundary, the case for the allocation of additional land as requested in objection **455b** is not considered to be compatible with the delivery of housing in Dulnain Bridge on a scale which would support the sustainable growth of the community.

- 6.6 The currently proposed southern boundary of the settlement, which accords with the southern boundary of proposal site DB/H1, is described in the Cairngorms Landscape Capacity for Housing Study (CD 7.19) as forming a settlement edge which is defined by woodland, with the woodland providing a distinctive backdrop and setting for the settlement. The land lying to the east of the A938 which is suggested for allocation by the objectors is classified in the landscape study as part of the river gorge. The wooded banks of the river are an important feature of the entrance to Dulnain Bridge and are integral to the distinctive gorge. They also connect visually with the woodland to the west and reinforce this wooded characteristic of the setting to the village. The area is of very high sensitivity and development in this location is considered in the landscape study to be contrary to the pattern of development within the main settlement area.
- 6.7 The allocation of the lands suggested by objector **455b** is also considered inappropriate from an ecological point of view. The area is partly covered by the Ancient Woodland Inventory and it is considered that much of the suggested land may be a good potential capercallie habitat, encompassing some excellent woodland bogs that could provide appropriate chick rearing habitats. Records indicate capercallie activity in the relatively recent past in Curr Wood and Easter Curr wood. As the area of land requested for allocation in objection **455b** is surrounded by a large area of woodland, incursion into the woodland through development would result in the loss of available habitat and would be likely to push the effect of disturbance further into the forest. The CNPA are also aware of the area being heavily used by red squirrels and in addition it has the potential to serve as a habitat for Scottish crossbill. The inclusion of the land within the settlement boundary and its allocation for housing purposes as requested in objection **455b** would have the potential to impact negatively on a variety of species sustained by the existing woodland area and in this regard is considered to be contrary to the first aim of the national park which seeks to conserve and enhance the natural heritage of the area.

7.0 Other Material Considerations

- 7.1 There are no further material considerations.

8.0 List of documents (including Core Documents)

- CD 2.4 SPP3 Planning for Housing, 2003 and 2008
- CD 6.6 Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan (1997)
- CD 7.1 Cairngorms National Park Plan 2007
- CD 7.3 CNPA Committee Report Consultation, May 2008
- CD 7.4 CNPA Committee Report 1st Modifications, October 2008
- CD 7.5 CNPA Committee Report 2nd Modifications, February 2009
- CD 7.14 Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report
- CD 7.15 SEA Non-technical Summary of Deposit Local Plan

- CD 7.16 SEA and Appropriate Assessment Local Plan Final
- CD 7.19 Cairngorms Landscape Capacity for Housing Study
- CD 7.23 Topic Paper 3 Approach to Housing Land Supply and Affordable Housing
- CD 7.24 Topic Paper 4 Background Information regarding allocated sites
- CD 7.28 Proposed Post-Inquiry Modifications Committee Report, 3 April 2009
- Letter from RSPB regarding capercallie records

9.0 Cairngorms National Park Witnesses for Hearing

- Mary Grier – Planning Officer, Development Management
- Gavin Miles – Strategic Planning and Policy Officer
- Matthew Hawkins – Senior Heritage Officer
- Justin Prigmore – Ecology Officer