

Date:			
Issue:	Grantown-on-Spey – Housing Allocations GS/H2		
Objector(s):	Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group	Objection ref:	400i(i)
	Roy Turnbull		390p

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 Housing Allocation GS/H2: Site North of Beachan Court, Grantown-on-Spey 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 The Deposit Local Plan (CD6.11) allocates strategic development sites within the settlement proposals section; these include land for Housing Development. The Local Plan requires to provide enough effective land for market and affordable housing to meet the economic and social needs of the Park’s communities, encouraging proactive settlement growth in the main settlements. The plan text specifies:

GS/H2 as a 3.25 hectare site to the north of Beachan Court with capacity for around 50 dwellings. The site is known to be used for wading birds and would require more detailed survey to establish the ecological importance of the site and the impact of any development.

- 2.2 The proposal and its associated wording as included in the Deposit Local Plan have not been altered.
- 2.3 The policies of relevance include:

Policy 22 – Housing Development within Settlement Boundaries provides opportunities for housing development on land within settlements on both land which is allocated and not specifically allocated. The policy states that housing proposals within settlement boundaries will be considered favourably where the development (a) occurs within an allocated site identified on the proposals maps; or (b) is compatible with existing and adjacent land uses.

3.0 Summary of objections

- 3.1 The objections covers the following issues:
- 3.2 **400i(i) /390p** The proposal is excessive and contrary to the 1st and 3rd aims of the Park.

4.0 Summary of Cairngorms National Park Authority Response

- 4.1 The Local Plan identifies a site for housing development of around 50 dwellings, north of Beachan Court to assist in meeting the identified need for Grantown-on-Spey. The Local Plan requires to

provide enough effective land for market and affordable housing to meet the Housing Land Requirement for the respective Local Authority areas, including within Badenoch & Strathspey, targets established by the Highland Structure Plan 2001 (CD6.2).

- 4.2 The promotion of sustainable economic and social development of the Park's communities is one of the aims of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 (CD1.3), and is borne out in the National Park Plan (CD7.1) through the strategic objectives for Sustainable Communities and Housing. The Local Plan takes its lead from the National Park Plan in directing development to the locations that will best deliver the Park's aims or avoid significant conflict with the aims. The proposed allocation of the site was informed by the SEA and an awareness of the environmental value of the land – the Grantown on Spey Housing sites were considered unlikely to have any significant negative environmental effects.
- 4.3 The CNPA have reviewed the proposal site GS/H2 and its extent in light of the comments made. The allocation follows existing site boundaries, is a natural extension to the settlement pattern and allows for sufficient land to be allocated for housing in Grantown on Spey. The site's sensitive nature is recognised and shall be subject to a Development Brief, prepared by the CNPA, highlighting design and layout, landscape and nature considerations in detailed guidance.

5.0 CNPA Recommendation

- 5.1 The CNPA recommend to the Reporter that the objection is rejected. The position regarding site allocations in Grantown on Spey has not changed. Therefore no modification is proposed, no further action is therefore required.

6.0 Assessment / Scope of Evidence

- 6.1 **400i(i)** Object to H2 on grounds of excessive scale, and that it conflicts with the 1st and 3rd aims of the Park. **390p** suggests the allocation conflicts with the 1st and 3rd aims of the Park
- 6.2 **Response:** The Local Plan identifies a site for housing development of around 50 dwellings, north of Beachan Court to assist in meeting the identified need for Grantown-on-Spey. The Local Plan requires to provide enough effective land for market and affordable housing to meet the economic and social needs of the Park's communities, encouraging proactive settlement growth in the main settlements
- 6.3 To achieve the long term vision for the National Park, set through the National Park Plan, there is a recognised need for communities to be sustainable in social, economic and environmental terms. The Local Plan takes its lead from the National Park Plan in directing development to the locations that will best deliver the Park's aims or avoid significant conflict with the aims. It is recognised that not all developments will make equal contributions to all Park aims, some developments may contribute to one or more aims whilst conflicting with others. To gain permission developments will have to comply with all relevant policies of the plan, and the 4 aims of the Park unless outweighed by the development's likely positive contribution, and where satisfactory measures are incorporated to minimise, mitigate or compensate the adverse effects of the development. Policy I - Development in the Cairngorms National Park, together with the other policies in the Local Plan is intended to support the co-ordinated delivery of the Park's aims and to promote and protect its special qualities and will be used in the assessment of all proposals, of national, regional and local significance, and in doing so, the planning authority will take into account the impact any development.

- 6.4 The Local Plan has been the subject of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) throughout its development, including in the consideration of the allocation of sites, assessing the likely significant environmental effects. The proposed allocation of the site was informed by the SEA and an awareness of the environmental value of the land – the Grantown on Spey Housing sites were considered unlikely to have any significant negative environmental effects. The site’s sensitive nature is recognised and shall be subject to a Development Brief, prepared by the CNPA, highlighting design and layout, landscape and nature considerations in detailed guidance.
- 6.5 The policies and proposals in the plan endeavour to provide a balanced approach to land allocation and services to support local communities and to meet local needs whilst protecting the outstanding natural and cultural heritage of the Park. The proposal text also makes reference to the site being known to be used for wading birds and would require more detailed survey to establish the ecological importance of the site and the impact of any development. It is considered that this recognition for appropriate ecological surveys provides clear guidance to developers; other Local Plan policies would also require to be taken into account requiring development to conserve and where possible enhance areas of value for biodiversity by requiring avoidance, suitable mitigation and management, or replacement
- 6.6 The CNPA have reviewed the extent of proposal site GS/H2. The allocation follows existing site boundaries, is a natural extension to the settlement pattern and allows for sufficient land to be allocated for housing in Grantown on Spey. The site’s sensitive nature is recognised and shall be subject to a Development Brief, prepared by the CNPA. No further modification is therefore required as a result of this objection.

7.0 Strategic issues

- 7.1 The promotion of sustainable economic and social development of the Park’s communities is one of the aims of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000, and is borne out in the National Park Plan through the strategic objectives for Sustainable Communities and Housing.
- 7.2 The National Park Plan 2007 (CD7.1) 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 Housing. 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.
- 7.3 The National Park Plan acknowledges that the conservation and enhancement of the special qualities which underpin the National Park’s importance and attraction, as well as much of its economy and communities, must form the basis of successful future management. The National Park Plan highlights the importance of this sense of wildness that can be experienced in the Park and has a strategic objective for its conservation and enhancement. The Park Plan also recognises that some activities and forms of development can affect the sense and experience of wildness by introducing new sights, sounds, or patterns in the landscape.

8.0 Other material considerations

- 8.1 None

9.0 List of documents (including Core Documents)

- CD7.1 Cairngorms National Park Plan 2007
- CD 7.16 Cairngorms National Park Local Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report June 2008

10.0 Cairngorms National Park Authority Witnesses for Formal Hearing

- Robert Grant – Planning Officer