

Date :		
Issue:	Request for the allocation of an additional area of land for residential development on land to the west of proposal site GoS/H2	
Objector(s):	Reidhaven Estate	Objection ref(s): 456q

Reporter :	Mrs. Jill Moody
Procedure :	Hearing

1.0 Overview

1.1 This statement sets out the Cairngorms National Park Authority response to the objection raised by Reidhaven Estate, in which it was requested that an additional area of land be allocated for residential purposes in an area to the west of proposal site GoS/H2. The response supplements the response made to the objection by the CNPA in its reports to Committee (CD7.3, 7.4 and 7.5). No further modifications are proposed following the consideration of the objection.

2.0 Provision of the Local Plan

2.1.1 The land which is the subject of objection **456q** is outside the Grantown on Spey settlement boundary as identified in the Cairngorms National Park Deposit Local Plan (1st and 2nd Modifications) (CD6.11, 6.12 and 6.13).

2.2 Related policies are:

- Tables 2-4 Housing Land Requirement and Supply
- Policy 24 Housing Development Outside Settlements
- Policy 1 Development in the Cairngorms National Park
- Policy 6 Biodiversity
- Policy 7 Landscape

3.0 Summary of Objection

3.1 One objection has been received covering the following :

- Objecting on the basis that land to the west of the settlement boundary of Grantown on Spey (adjacent to proposal site GoS/ H1) should be allocated for residential development.

4.0 Summary of Cairngorms National Park Authority Response

4.1 The CNPA have identified housing sites in Grantown on Spey 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 Grantown on Spey 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. Two housing sites have been identified (GoS/H1 and GoS/H2). The sites have already been allocated in the adopted Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan 1997 (CD6.6). There is no justification for additional housing land to be allocated. The settlement strategy is to identify settlement boundaries and it is not appropriate to consider extending the settlement boundary to include lands suggested for residential development by the objector. In addition, the land suggested in objection 456q is forestry land which contributes to the setting of Grantown on Spey and the erosion of this feature would detract from the landscape character of the general area.

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 the extent of allocated land and the identified settlement boundary is confirmed.
-

6.0 Assessment / Scope of Evidence

- 6.1 **456q** objects to the Local Plan on the basis of a request for the allocation of an additional area of land for residential purposes. It is requested that an area to the west of the settlement boundary, which is currently used for forestry purposes, be considered a suitable site for residential use, and that the proposal map and text are amended to include it within the Grantown on Spey settlement area.
- 6.2 **Response** : The CNP Local Plan, in line with SPP3 (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 (please refer to 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 Grantown on Spey have been made in this context. The sites proposed for allocation have been allocated in the adopted Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan for residential purposes since 1997. Paragraph 7.5 (Page 61) of the CNP 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. Based on the process outlined above, there is no justification for an extension to the identified settlement boundary of Grantown on Spey or the allocation of an additional area of land of the extent proposed for the purposes of additional residential land.
- 6.3 Paragraph 5.41 of the Deposit Local Plan provides further confirmation of 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 scale of the existing settlement area of Grantown on Spey, the sites identified for housing are sufficient in facilitating the scale of development which is appropriate and necessary for Grantown on Spey in the five year lifetime of the Plan. In addition, Policy 22 – Housing Development within Settlement Boundaries (page 45) 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 456q is not considered to be compatible with the delivery of housing in Grantown on Spey on a scale which would support the sustainable growth of the community.
- 6.4 The land which is suggested for residential allocation by objector 456q is identified in the Cairngorms Landscape Capacity Housing Study (CD7.19) as part of the wooded slopes that generally extend to the west of the settlement. The steep wooded slopes are some of the key characteristics which influence the expansion of the settlement. In terms of landscape character,

the area is noted as being of very high sensitivity where “development would disrupt the secluded character of the woodland.” The Cairngorms Landscape Capacity Housing Study also comments that the “steep wooded slopes would be difficult to modify without considerable earth moving and removal of attractive specimen trees and woodland.” In addition, the form of the existing settlement of Grantown on Spey is strongly associated with level ground above the River Spey. Development on the wooded slopes suggested by the objectors would compromise the relationship between the level settlement area and the steep hill slopes which provide the setting and containing edge of the settlement. The allocation of the land suggested in objection **456q** for residential purposes would have the potential to impact negatively on the landscape character and setting of Grantown on Spey and would result in the erosion of woodland habitats, all of which would be contrary to the first aim of the National Park.

7.0 Other Material Considerations

7.1 There are no other materials considerations.

8.0 List of documents (including Core Documents)

- CD2.4 SPP3 Planning for Housing 2003 and 2008
- CD 6.6 Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan (1997)
- CD6.11 Deposit Local Plan
- CD6.12 Deposit Local Plan 1st Modifications
- CD6.13 Deposit Local Plan 2nd Modifications
- 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 7.6 Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- 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 7.17 Appropriate Assessment Grantown on Spey HI
- CD 7.19 Cairngorms Landscape Capacity for Housing Study
- CD7.23 Topic Paper 3 Approach to Housing Land Supply and Affordable Housing
- CD7.24 Topic Paper 4 – Background Information regarding allocated sites
- CD7.28 Proposed Post-Inquiry Modifications Committee Report, 3 April 2009

9.0 Cairngorms National Park Witnesses for Hearing

- Mary Grier – Planning Officer, Development Management
- Matthew Hawkins – Senior Heritage Officer