

Badenoch & Strathspey Conservation Group
STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE
Hearing Session

Provision of the Local Plan

Kincraig H1, ED1

Summary of objection(s)

H1 would involve loss of agricultural land and loss of natural, native birch woodland with a rich ground layer. It is in a highly visible site from the railway and road. The woodland in it is an important landscape feature. This allocation conflicts with all 4 aims of the Park

One red listed flowering plant has been recorded in 2007 on the field in exceptional abundance.

Excessive scale and pace of development. H1 adds some 40 houses in the next 5 years, on top of the 28 houses recently built in MacBean Road, and further houses recently built nearer the community hall. This is an unsustainable scale and pace of development.

We urge the CNPA to recognise the woodland in H1 and across the railway line as of at least regional importance and safeguard them accordingly. The woodland across the railway line supports a classic location of the aspen-dependent flagship species the Aspen hoverfly, that depends upon old, aspen/birch woodlands.

ED1

This site is partly natural deciduous woodland with birch and aspen, and a rich ground vegetation with heather and blaeberry (W17). The site includes mature and regenerating aspen.

The LP cannot take forward delivering Park Plan aims to enhance aspen if it supports destroying natural stands of aspen and connectivity and permeability at a site like this. This allocation conflicts with 1st, 3rd and 4th aims.

The site is classic landscape with well-spaced, native trees forming a very natural area of open woodland, interspersed with open rough grassland. The grassland includes Devil's Bit Scabious that supports rare invertebrates, and is likely to be valuable for invertebrates, including bumble bees, and may include the UK Priority species the Blaeberry Bee which is particularly associated with blaeberry.

These habitats provide continuity and permeability with the aspen and birch in the surrounding landscape.

Song Thrush and Dunnock, both declining species (Song Thrush Red Listed, Dunnock Amber listed), use the site.

Areas of natural woodland habitat are a particularly significant component of the Cairngorm straths landscape, very attractive in the landscape, very rich in biodiversity, and characteristic of the locality. This resource is not being used sustainably in the LP.

Close to the site a path from the access road underpass to the school provides a very attractive route both to the school and as part of several routes e.g. linking with the path opposite the school leading to the woods and Speybank. The development of this site would reduce the quality of experience of this path.

The development of this site would further impact on the adjacent burn, a tributary of the Spey. This burn would potentially be impacted on for the entire stretch from the H1 site through to ED1. It is likely to be used by otter.

The site is of particular educational value being so accessible to the primary school.

Recommendation.

Omit H1 from allocation or at least a substantial part of it, and certainly the fenced off woodland corner.

Omit ED1 from allocation