

Date:			
Issue:	Policy 22 – Housing Development within settlement boundaries		
Objector(s):	DW and IM Duncan	Objection ref(s):	037i
	James Hall		371c
	Dunachton Estate		418k
	Alvie and Dalraddy Estate		439r

Reporter	Mrs Jill Moody / Mr Hugh Begg
Procedure:	Written representation

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 (CD6.11, 12 and 13) in respect of Policy 22: Housing Development within Settlement Boundaries, and supplements the response made to those objections by the Cairngorms National Park Authority in its reports to Committee (CD7.2 CD7.3 and CD7.4). The policy as modified includes additional guidance on opportunities for development within settlements, and also within the supporting text, a guide to house size balance, previously contained within Policy 23 of the Deposit Plan (CD6.11). No further changes are now proposed for this policy.

2.0 Provision of the Local Plan

- 2.1 Policy 22 within the Deposit Local Plan as modified gives policy guidance to allow a consistent framework for development proposals and for the assessment of applications for housing within settlement boundaries as identified within the proposals maps of the Plan. During the current transitional arrangements set out in the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 (Development Planning) (Saving, Transitional and Consequential Provisions) Order 2008, the policy is intended to provide an appropriate level of guidance to meet the requirements of SPPI (CD2.2 para 37-38) and Scottish Planning Policy (CD2.1 para 15-18) and ensure that the assessment of development proposals is carried out in a consistent manner.
- 2.2 The Policy has been added to the Plan through the 1st modifications (CP6.13) as an additional policy to the original Deposit Local Plan.
- 2.3 In considering the objections to this policy and its subsequent modifications, it is now considered that information in paragraph 5.58 is erroneous and does not accurately reflect the information that will be taken into account when assessing need for particular forms of development in any given case. A post inquiry modification is therefore proposed to rectify this.
 Paragraph 5.58 delete *‘Where no such information exists a benchmark of 75% two and three bed units will be used as a guide to reflect the findings of ‘Planning for affordable housing in the Cairngorms National Park’ Communities Scotland, March 2008.’*
 Assessments will therefore take into account the information provided in the list at the beginning of the paragraph which will include local housing strategies.
 This is an officer recommendation which has not been endorsed by the CNPA Board.

3.0 Summary of objection(s)

3.1 Four objections raising three issues have been lodged to this policy and wish to have their objections considered by written representation:

- The policy should be more flexible to react to demand when it arises, both in terms of the policy and the settlement boundaries in the proposals maps. **(418k)**
- The policy should include direct reference to community benefit secured through development **(371c)**
- The approach to create a rigid set of rules to house sizes is inflexible, and should be more flexible to react to demand and ensure the policy can react to the economics of development. **(037i, 439r)**

4.0 Summary of Cairngorms National Park Authority response

- Flexibility – the policy is intended to clarify the opportunities for development within settlement boundaries, in line with SPPI, and the proposed flexible approach to boundaries would blur this clarity. **(418k)**
- Community benefit – is addressed through Policy 20, and any community benefit will be linked to the nature of the development. **(371c)**
- Balance of house sized – the original policy of the deposit plan has been deleted, and the supporting text in Para 5.58 creates additional flexibility by using community needs assessments and other data to support the balance of houses proposed. **(037i, 439r, 456f)**

5.0 CNPA Commendation to Reporter

- 5.1 It is commended to the Reporter that all objections are rejected subject to the deletion of the above wording in Para 5.58.

6.0 Assessment / Scope of Evidence

- 6.1 **037i** objects to the assumption that low cost housing for rent makes development unviable, but that this provision simply pushes the costs onto higher value open market houses. Overall the approach to housing is contrary to the 1st aim of the Park.
- 6.2 **Response:** The need for a variety of houses is however important in all developments to ensure that an appropriate mix is provided, both in terms of size, and tenure mix. The policy has been amended in the 1st modifications to ensure that the most up to date information is taken into account when developing housing proposals in settlements, to meet the demand of the area. In terms of the aims of the Park, all the aims of the Park guide the decision making process, and both the Local Plan and the determination of planning applications have them at their heart. (CD6.12 Para 1.3) The overall approach is not considered to conflict and with the protection offered by the other policies of the Plan, no further change is proposed.
- 6.3 **371c** considers the policy lacking as it does not include reference to community benefit that might be secured as a result of the development.
- 6.4 **Response:** The consideration of community benefit or developer contribution is dealt with in Policy 20, where the issues which are taken into account are clearly set out. It is not therefore considered necessary to repeat the ways in which developer contributions are considered in this policy. Para 1.20 clearly states that all the relevant policies of the plan should be looked at, and no cross referencing is included within the Plan as a whole. The policy regarding housing in settlements is not therefore considered deficient or unclear and no change is proposed.

- 6.5 **425n** objects to the setting of any rigid criteria to dictate the balance of house sizes, which could deter development as a whole, and create criteria, which does not reflect market need or current demand.
- 6.6 **Response:** The original policy of the deposit plan, Policy 23, did set a rigid percent benchmark for house sizes in all developments, but through the 1st modifications, this policy has been deleted.
- 6.7 Supporting text to Policy 22 now highlights the need for community needs assessments, local housing needs studies, local waiting lists or other information to influence the mix of house sizes within developments. Where none exists a benchmark is given as guidance. This change is considered now to provide appropriate flexibility to the policy, and allow for the most up to date information to be taken into account when looking at what balance to develop. No further change is therefore proposed.
- 6.8 **418k** also objects to the setting of any rigid criteria that would ultimately deter development. The issue is as above, and argument in support of the policy as set out.
- 6.9 **439r** also objects to the setting of any rigid criteria that would ultimately deter development. The issue and argument in support of the policy is as set out above.
- 6.10 **456f** also objects to the setting of any rigid criteria that would ultimately deter development. The issue and argument in support of the policy is as set out above.

7.0 Strategic Issues

- 7.1 The approach taken supports the strategic objectives of the National Park Plan (CD7.1) regarding sustainable communities (Page 67). Here the aim is to focus settlement growth on the main settlements and plan growth to meet community needs in other settlements.

8.0 List of documents (including Core Documents)

- CD2.1 Scottish Planning Policy 2008 Parts 1 and 2
- CD2.2 SPP1 The Planning System
- CD6.11 Deposit Local Plan
- CD6.12 Deposit Local Plan 1st modifications
- CD6.13 Deposit Local Plan 2nd modifications
- CP7.1 Cairngorms National Park Plan 2007
- CD7.3 CNPA Committee Report Consultation May 2008
- CD7.4 CNPA Committee Report 1st Modifications October 2008
- CD7.5 CNPA Committee Report 2nd Modifications February 2009