

Badenoch & Strathspey Conservation Group  
**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE**  
**Hearing Session**

**Provision of the Local Plan**

**Aviemore ED2**

**Summary of objection(s)**

This allocation conflicts with all 4 aims of the Park. It is a valuable habitat, supports important biodiversity and an attractive landscape feature (1<sup>st</sup> aim). It is used for walking and informal recreation (3<sup>rd</sup> aim). It contributes to the attractiveness of Aviemore as a destination (4<sup>th</sup> aim).

This is an important area of semi-natural habitat including grassland, heathland, birch, aspen, juniper and Scots pine. It is used by bats.

It is readily accessible to many people and provides a good area for informal recreation, including bikes and dog walking.

Its relatively quiet, secluded and natural character provides an area where people can experience a sense of 'getting away from it all' right in the heart of Aviemore. Recent survey has highlighted the importance to people of wildness in the CNP. We consider that wild and natural qualities in the countryside are vital elements that play a significant role in enjoyment of the countryside. In a 'Park for all' the CNPA should be prioritising the retention of such areas in the immediate environs of communities, so that people can experience getting away from it all and quiet solitude close to their homes, without this only being an experience for people who can go to the hills and the remoter parts of the NP.

These kinds of sites can be important for all ages and we note that ED2 is close to the proposed area for the new primary school. It would provide a highly valuable outdoor educational area accessible on foot to the school. It is worth noting that the proximity of the present primary school to the high quality environment of Milton Wood has facilitated delivering a high quality of environmental education.

The variety of habitats, their ecological high quality and relative naturalness and consequent richness for biodiversity, and for example the interesting features of ecological succession at this site make it of outstanding value for environmental education. These features cannot be reproduced.

The cumulative impact of land use changes at Aviemore must be considered by the CNPA. In recent years the large area associated with the new golf course has been substantially lost for walking, birch woodland on the AWI has been destroyed and the landscape has been significantly downgraded; the Achantoul burn area has acquired a far more suburban character with the new housing development of Lochan Mor and the landscape quality and views have been degraded; the building site at High Burnside has been lost for recreation and the highly attractive partially wooded landscape it supported has been destroyed; the very attractive upper reach of the Milton Burn has also been lost for recreation due to this development.

These losses of areas of quality countryside have occurred at the same time as an increased population, meaning increased numbers of people are seeking access to a diminished countryside.

We understand there has been no survey undertaken by the CNPA of this area.

**Recommendation.**

Omit entire allocation from the LP.  
Re-zone entire site as Environment.  
Consider recognising as of 2<sup>nd</sup> tier site status.

Market Research Partners, Edinburgh 2008. Public Perceptions of Wilds places and Landscapes in Scotland.  
Commissioned Report 291. SNH.