

Cairngorms National Park Authority – Local Plan Inquiry

Background information regarding site selection for allocation of sites within proposals maps of Local Plan

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This topic paper sets out the methodology followed in the identification and selection of sites to be allocated within the Local Plan (Deposit and further modifications) for development. It supports the work carried out in regard to housing land supply and expands on the need to ensure an effective allocation for land during and beyond the plan period. In the selection process a variety of considerations have been taken into account, leaving the Plan with its current allocations as shown in the Proposals Maps. The paper considers the selection of land for housing, employment and community use.

2.0 Allocation within an existing adopted Local Plan

2.1 When developing the consultative Draft Local Plan (2005) and the Deposit Local Plan (2007) the allocations within existing adopted Local Plans were taken as a starting point, the 4 adopted plans at that time being:

Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan (1997), The Highland Council

Aberdeenshire Local Plan (2006), Aberdeenshire Council

The Moray Development Plan (2000), The Moray Council

The Angus Local Plan (2000), Angus Council

2.2 The adoption of a site within an existing Local Plan was considered to give certain weight to that designation. Sites were then reassessed to consider how they fitted with the policies of the Deposit Local Plan and the strategic guidance provided within the National Park Plan. Where however the allocations contained within current plans was considered to conflict with the policy approach proposed in the Deposit Local Plan, or strategic guidance from the Park Plan, sites were not included. This is particularly the case with sites unrelated to settlements where the Plan does not identify sites, but rather creates a policy approach to assessment, through the creation of a framework of policies to assess proposals by.

2.3 Sites from current plans have also been excluded where the amount of land being proposed for any particular use was considered to be in excess of the requirements identifies within the Plan. The proposals maps identify land for the life of the Plan and to meet the statutory requirements.

Additional sites have subsequently been identified in response to particular representations made during the local plan consultation process, below. Where development of land is considered to potentially be in excess of the identified need, sites have been excluded, based on other criteria below.

3.0 Allocation of additional sites

3.1 During the consultation phases of the Local Plan representations made highlighted the need to identify a certain amount of land allocated for economic development and environment. These sites were selected to provide a more complete picture of the opportunities existing within settlements, and were included in the 1st modifications to the Local Plan.

4.0 The results found from the SEA

4.1 The Local Plan has been the subject of a Strategic Environmental Assessment, relating both to the policies contained within it, and the proposals relating to the allocation of land. As the plan has been modified, both at 1st and 2nd modification stages, the work regarding this assessment has been updated to inform the process.

4.2 The findings of the sites as allocated is set out in Appendix I – SEA objectives, and is a summary of the findings of the Environmental Report, assessing each site against agreed objectives modified following receipt of comments from the Consultation Authorities on the Scoping Report. Full details are contained within the SEA Environmental Report (CP7.11).

5.0 The results found from the Appropriate Assessment

5.1 The National Park Authority has prepared a full Appropriate Assessment to assess the effects of the Local Plan on European designated sites. The assessment considered the likely impacts of the policies, proposals and land allocations against the qualifying interest and conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 sites. A full copy of the assessment is given in CP7.13. In addition to this overarching assessment, 2 site specific assessments have also been undertaken (CP7.14 and CP7.15) to assess the impact of development on two sites allocated within the Plan. The findings of these assessments have influenced the allocations within the Local Plan accordingly.

6.0 Any existing permissions or developments on the site

6.1 A full analysis of each site in regard to any extant permission has also been undertaken, set out in Appendix I – Position regarding development. Where sites have extant permission it was

considered appropriate to take this forward into the deposit plan. Where applications have been registered but are yet to be determined, the National Park Authority will continue to process this in the normal way, and on determination will amend the text and proposals maps accordingly to give the most up to date picture of development sites within the Local Plan area, prior to the plan being adopted.

7.0 The current use of the land

7.1 A full assessment of the current use of land is given in Appendix I – Existing Development and Position regarding Development. It gives a full picture of the current use of land, as matched against the proposed use.

8.0 Landscape Capacity findings

8.1 The Landscape Capacity work was commissioned by the CNPA in April 2005 to assess the potential effects of new development on the character of the landscape surrounding settlements within the National Park. The study addressed landscape, architectural and visual issues, and was aimed at setting out the landscape considerations which may be relevant to any given site, and to inform the development of a location strategy as given in the Local Plan. In the study ‘development’ is generally assumed to mean domestic scale residential development of 5 houses or more, although in smaller settlements sites were considered based on a single house development.

8.1 The full report is contained within CP7.16 and has informed the selection of sites across the Park, in conjunction with other considerations as set out within this report.

9.0 Other considerations

9.1 The allocation of sites has also taken into consideration other criteria which may have an impact on the appropriateness of development on any given site. These include natural heritage designations, built heritage designations, objections raised through the consultation process to the Deposit Local Plan and its modifications, and subsequent discussions regarding modifications undertaken by the CNPA Board.

10.0 Conclusions

10.1 The sites within the Local Plan as marked on the Proposals maps have been selected using a variety of criteria all of which have been weighed up to support the inclusion of that site.