

Issue:	Kincraig – allocation of KC/HI and EDI		
Objector(s):	Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group	Objection ref(s):	400i(q)

Reporter	Mrs. Jill Moody
Procedure:	Informal hearing

Rebuttal

- 1.1 **This sets out the CNPA’s rebuttal of the statement submitted by the Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group in relation to the allocation of HI and EDI.**
- 1.2 **Objection:** The objector advises that the allocation of the HI site will result in the loss of agricultural land and an area of native birch woodland with biodiversity value, within the site. Development on the site may also impact on the adjacent burn which is a tributary of the River Spey.
- 1.3 **Response:** The CNPA reiterates that neither the site, nor the adjacent burn, carry any natural heritage designations. The allocation of the site, the implementation of other policies in the Local Plan and the provision of the supplementary Development Brief will provide opportunities to conserve and enhance the biodiversity value of the native birch woodland part of the site and protect the burn.
- 1.4 **Objection:** The objector reiterates that the allocation of the HI site, alongside the 28 houses recently built on adjacent land, represents an excessive scale and pace of development in Kincraig.
- 1.5 **Response:** In support of the CNPA’s position, the CNPA wishes to intimate that the allocation of the site contributes to the delivery of effective housing land supply (see modified background text to Housing Policies CD7.28), and has been assessed against the site selection criteria set out in Topic Paper 4 (CD7.24). The site is therefore considered to be of a scale and size which can accommodate the number of houses proposed without detriment to the character of the settlement or the wider area.
- 1.6 **Objection:** The objector has now put forward more specific reasons for objecting to the allocation of Economic Development site KC/EDI. Previously, only a holding objection had been put forward with no specific reasons. The objection states that part of the site is natural deciduous woodland with birch and aspen and a rich ground vegetation of heather and blueberry. These habitats provide continuity and permeability with the birch and aspen areas found in the surrounding landscape. This area is rich in biodiversity value with several species using it. Natural woodland habitats of this type form a significant component of the Cairngorm Straths landscape. In addition, close to the site, there is a path which provides an attractive route to the school and is part of the wider network of routes linking to Speybank. The quality of this route will be diminished.
- 1.7 **Response:** In line with SPPs 2 (Economic Development) (CD2.3) and 15 (Planning for Rural Development) (CD2.11), and to meet the objectives of the Cairngorms National Park Plan (CD7.1) and the 4th aim of the National Park, the CNP Local Plan has identified this site as one which will offer economic development opportunities of the appropriate scale for Kincraig or consolidate an existing business (see also Paragraph 7.10 Economic Development, Page 62 of the CNP Local Plan). The settlement statement text states, that the site of the Baldow Smiddy and

land to the rear provide some opportunity for growth in economic development in the settlement. However, it also advises that the site is a prominent one and that proposals will be required to take account of the prominent nature of the site.

- 1.8 The natural heritage value of a small portion of the site to the rear is recognised (Ancient Woodland and Semi-Natural Ancient Woodland Inventories). However, a detailed assessment of the impact of any proposal on the site will be assessed against other policies contained in the Local Plan eg. Policy 4 (Other Important Natural and Earth Heritage Sites and Interests), Policy 6 (Biodiversity) and Policy 7 (Landscape). The allocation of EDI land here recognises the existence of an existing and historical economic development site/business. The adjacent burn does not carry any natural heritage designation but potential impacts can be assessed and mitigated as appropriate, at the time of assessment of any proposal for the site.
- 1.9 The existence of path networks in the area are acknowledged but these are not proposed Core Paths in the CNPA Draft Core Paths Plan. The implementation of other policies in the Local Plan ie. Policy 18 (Design Standards for Development) and Policy 34 (Outdoor Access) will ensure that the issue of potential impact on these routes is properly assessed and mitigated where necessary.

Conclusion

- 2.0 Sites HI and EDI have caused concern for the objector because of their scale and because of the potential impacts on natural heritage interests. The CNPA maintains its position that HI is a site which can contribute to the effective housing land supply identified elsewhere in the Local Plan, and that concerns in relation to impacts on natural heritage interests can be properly assessed and mitigated through the provision of the Development Brief and the implementation of other policies in the Plan. Site EDI recognises the need for the provision of economic development land to help sustain the needs of the Kincaig community, and meet the 4th aim of the National Park. Site EDI accommodates an existing economic development use and there is an opportunity to develop the potential here for some economic growth, while adequately protecting natural heritage interests through the implementation of other policies in the Local Plan.

CNPA Commendation to Reporter

- 3.0 It is commended to the reporter that the residential allocation of KC/HI and the Economic Development site KC/EDI are retained.