

Mr Don McKee
3/12/2005
Head of Planning
Cairngorm National Park Authority
Albert Hall
BALLATER AB35 5QB

Dear Mr McKee,

DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

Ballater (RD) Ltd is a charitable company limited by guarantee. The main reason for its establishment was to promote, establish, and operate schemes for the benefit of the local community. During the past 10 years many community projects have been delivered including Ballater Walking Week, a community bus, Ballater Victoria Week, and Planning for Real.

We have studied the Preliminary Draft Local Plan as far as it relates to the Ballater area, and we have also had several discussions with Mr Brockie & Mr Miles.

With regard to the proposals for housing we welcome the statement “Housing should focus on providing for local needs and in particular on affordable housing to rent....”. We note that sites for a total of 21 units have been identified at H1, 2 & 3 and fully support this proposal. However, we cannot support the proposal for site FH1 which might provide for about 35 units in the future.

Should the need for affordable housing in excess of the 21 units proposed for sites H1, 2 & 3 arise, we believe that these could be provided by 1) further gap sites and 2) the provision of rural exemption sites which would allow for small groups of affordable housing outside the settlement boundary.

A public consultation was carried out by us on 4 April 2002. This indicated that the overwhelming majority of the residents were in favour of the establishment of a community woodland to the north-east of the settlement, encompassing site FH1. This was confirmed during the more recent Planning For Real exercises. There can be little doubt that the community feel that more amenity ground is required in or close to the settlement and that a community woodland would be an environmental asset of town-scale importance.

After making representations to Aberdeenshire Council when they were provided with a copy of our Strategic Plan for Ballater, they supported this view and proposed that the area should be designated as “protected”.

We believe that the creation of a community woodland on site FH1 would enhance the

landscape and biodiversity in accordance with Policy 3. It would also be of great benefit to residents and tourists and would therefore be in accordance with Policy 29.

We would ask you to consider the designation of site FH1 as “protected” in order to pave the way for the proposed community woodland.

Y s,