

The Grantown on Spey and Vicinity Community Council wish to make the following comments and recommendations in respect of the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan Main Issues Report.

Section 2. Planning in the Cairngorms National Park.. aims and vision

To meet the Park's vision the three long term outcomes set out in the report highlight heritage, visitor experiences and economy. The second outcome (Visitor experience - people enjoying the Park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences.) would be more acceptable if it included residents as well as visitors.

GOSVCC would like this section to read: Resident and Visitor Experiences – people enjoying living in and visiting the park through outstanding facilities, opportunities and learning experiences.

Section 3. Progress – Annex 1

The report identifies a review of eleven policies and asks if the changes they recommend are acceptable.

GOSVCC believes, in respect of Policies 1 – 3, that there is a need, in Grantown, at least, for more tourist accommodation, especially at low and medium cost and including campsites. There is again a shortage of reference to people – the need for pedestrian friendly high streets, the promotion of better “public space” and the need for clearly defined cycle routes.

Under Policy 9, GOSVCCV notes that cultural heritage appears to be dominated by buildings and not people, nor the arts nor the public realm. In Policy 11, a review of developer contributions is welcomed and the need for clear policy statements and open reporting encouraged.

GOSVCC would recommend these policies amended in the light of this

Section 4. Main Issues.

Ten of what the authority considers main issues are set out for consideration. It is noted that the questions are largely of the form “Do you agree?” and not “What do you think?” or “How can this be achieved?”

GOSVCC would wish to have previous consultation on what the community perceives to be its needs and wishes to make the following observations and questions which we would like to see addressed:

Main Issue 1. Over-arching development strategy. Development on lands beyond settlements.

Included should also be an agenda of protecting land immediately outside the Park boundaries yet influencing approaches to and views from the Park eg Dava Moor and proposed windfarm developments. There is a need to extend the park boundaries in this direction to protect this valuable open space.

Main Issue 2 Designing Great Places. Distinctive development. It seems significant opportunities are missed in the development statements. The approaches outlined need to be flexible yet strongly emphasised and enforced with developers – development must fit the landscape, the heritage and culture, the existing building styles and public realm as well as being potentially innovative and exciting. We understand that beside the local development plan there is likely to be further guidance on meeting expectations for the highest standards of design. What might this guidance be and how can communities be assured that any such guidance can easily be flouted?

Main Issue 3. Road and rail.

Whilst maximising the road and rail infrastructure potential as stated there is a massive need to compensate communities bypassed by both the A9 and the railway and share resources equitably in eg Strathspey and Badenoch where Newtonmore, Kingussie and Aviemore have the benefits of both and the additional funding because of both.

What such support might there be for such bypassed communities?

Main Issue 6. Economic Development.

There seem here to be no plans to seek land for economic development in this part of Strathspey – Boat, Nethy, Grantown, Cromdale or Advie. Despite a critical shortage of or inaccessibility of industrial estate land in Grantown for small businesses.

Main Issue 8. Planning Obligations.

There is here a need to ensure the provision of far better and more consistent policy and practice. Ref comment for Policy 11, section 3.

Main Issue 10. Land Management of Upland Areas.

There should be a recognition of the need for wider consultation and more attention paid to local organisations as well as eg SNH.

Are there plans to consult more widely than the statutory agencies for land management.

5. Settlement-based issues.

GOSVCC wish to make the following points: In considering land for development in Grantown, there is a need to ensure retention of the open spaces between the built up area and the woodlands especially the Mossie and the land adjacent to Grant House. There is a planned development space behind the Ian Charles in the top corner of the grazing land there. This area H2 is not considered by GOSVCC as suitable for housing nor much of THC039.

The requirement for housing at the levels suggested is questioned and much of the requirement could be satisfied by improvements to High Street upper flats and backland buildings. The ground behind Grant House is suitable for allotments rather than that at the corner of the Black Park. Space for small businesses is required. There is a need for space and support for new developments for tourism (low to medium cost accommodation) and for heritage developments. Derelict sites around the town should become a priority for development. The infrastructure improvements required to support the developments proposed in the Settlement Plan for Grantown and we suggest these need to be included in the Plan itself rather than leaving this to be addressed by the Planning Authorities when considering planning applications and to add as conditions to any consent granted. The infrastructure improvements highlighted in particular were roads, schools, water and wastewater, Doctor. and Dentist.

Further questions include:

What protection is being offered for the band of open green space between the built areas and the wooded areas?

Are there plans to designate the Mossie as an area requiring special protection?

Can the area between Grant House and the Hospital be designated as not for housing development

Some areas on the map are marked as "Reasonable Alternative Options" yet not preferred. If a developer comes up with a proposal for one of these sites, what will be the CNPA position? – eg field at Heathfield opposite hospital which is considered important open space.

What plans are there for increased land designated for commercial development?

There would appear to be considerable potential for development of High Street and backland properties. Should this be included in the plan?