

Landmark Forest Adventure Park

Response to

‘Cairngorm National Park Local Development Plan – Main Issues Report’

Request to designate land to the west of Landmark as ‘Economic Development Tourism’ in the local development Plan.

Introduction.

Landmark Forest Adventure Park is a successful visitor attraction operating in the village of Carrbridge. Winner of various awards, it is a consistent 4.5 star Visit Scotland and TripAdvisor attraction. It is well regarded both as an employer and as a quality attraction.

Opened on 1970 – it was the first purpose built Visitor Centre in Europe. It has expanded its operation almost continuously since then.

Success in attracting more visitors and increasing the dwell time has resulted in a need to purchase land to the West of the main site.

Available land is set by the seller at 42 acres – much more than is required for immediate purposes but presenting a challenge and a great opportunity for the company.

Landmark Forest Adventure Park requests that the 42 acres (approx.) of land to the west between Landmark and the railway line (as shown on the appended plan) be designated as ‘Economic development land for tourism’ on the new local development plan 2020.

Expansion and Increasing dwell time.

As Landmark Forest Adventure Park has grown so too has the need for more and better car parking. In 2007 this was met by the addition to a new area of parking to the west of the main site. Currently there is room for around 450 cars on site.

In recent years, with visitors staying on site longer, the need for more parking spaces has re-emerged. On a few peak days we already have many more cars than we have parking for. Should the much needed improvements to our attractions go ahead as planned, it is

anticipated that this will increase the pressure on on-street parking and the village car park, a situation that the company is very keen to avoid.

Visitor Footfall.

Landmark Forest Adventure Park welcomes currently 166,000 visits annually with the majority arriving in the April to October period. It is estimated that visitor dwell time is between four and five hours. With current growth forecasts it is anticipated that, by 2022, this will increase to around 180,000 visits and a dwell time of over five hours.

Restructuring of the site.

There is also a need to manage the visit more effectively to improve flow and spread loadings. This would be aided considerably by the addition of more space for restructuring the internal layout of the park in a more planned manner rather than on the ad hoc basis to date.

Land purchase opportunity.

The company has approached the owner of the land to the west of the park with a view to purchasing enough land to allow expansion to our overflow car park accommodating demand for the foreseeable future. The landowner is amenable to selling land but is concerned that the sale of a small section of forestry land would compromise the forestry value of the remaining land in that 'compartment'. The landowner would only be interested in selling a full 42 acres rather than the 10 acres required by Landmark.

The company has considered this and believe that the potential purchase may be of benefit. It would provide room not only for the extra car parking, but also for future expansion into an area of very low quality commercial forestry land. This would take pressure off our existing high quality native pine woodland

The potential purchase would bring other benefits. It would perhaps allowing us to re-site some existing larger attractions to better, more remote, locations with a consequent improvement in local amenity.

On first analysis it is envisaged that the land might be developable on the basis of;

2018 – 2022 –

- Car parking 5 acres
- Low intensity attractions including simple access tracks (minimal buildings, foundations and utilities. Minimal tree felling with tree planting mitigation for any removal as part of a Native Woodland Restoration Scheme – see below) 2.5 - 5 acres

2023 – 2028 –

- Low intensity attractions as above 3 Acres. Tree planting as above.
- Full development of a hub/main building/structure and services 1 - 2 acres.

2028 onward –

- Low intensity attractions as above. 3 acres.

All unused land – including a ‘sterile’ untouched strip bordering the new route of the core path to the north-west of the site then running along the railway to re-join the existing core path, (see appended plan) to be part of the ‘Phased Native Woodland Restoration’. These are purely indicative predictions made at this early stage.

Core Path Consideration.

Currently a core path runs on the boundary between the land owned by Seafield Estates and Landmark. It is envisaged that the core path would be accommodated on a new route running west along the north boundary between the land in question and that owned by the Woodland Trust to the north. On approaching the railway line it would turn to the south to follow the route of the railway line, re-joining the core path at a point along the Railway line. It is suggested that the path might be routed at a suitable distance back from the actual railway line for maximum amenity.

Phased Native Woodland Restoration.

The ownership of the 42 acres of low grade Forestry plantation land to the west of Landmark Park would also present an opportunity for the company to instigate a *Native Woodland Restoration Scheme* for areas not required for direct business. The aim – over time - would be to remove non-native tree species and replant locally sourced Scots Pine resulting in significant habitat and biodiversity improvements in a key location that is bordered by high quality Native woodland to the East (Landmark) and the North (Woodland Trust).

Business Sustainability and Employment.

Currently one of the major employers in the National Park, Landmark employs around 80 – 100 FTE staff mostly living within the local area. A further 25 FTE are employed at the Landmark Press site in the village. Expansion of the operation as envisaged into the land on the west side of the Landmark, would lead to increased employment opportunities and would also be a major benefit in maintaining a sustainable and stable operation.

Further company information.

Visitor Centres Limited also operates Landmark Press, a tourism promotion division also based in Carrbridge. The company owns The Edinburgh Camera Obscura, and operates Inveraray Jail, Argyll.

