

- 2.4.2** In the Final Draft, published in 1992, reference to the wider principle of new communities was deleted, whilst the provisions for An Camas Mòr were retained.
- 2.4.3** The Cairngorms Working Party expressed its explicit support for several elements of the general planning strategy for the District, notably the expansion of Aviemore as the main growth point including the proposals for a new community at An Cams Mòr. This support for An Camas Mòr was subject to there being a detailed environmental assessment of the potential effects of such a development and confirmation that it would not give rise to any unacceptable impacts. Highland Regional Council accepted that the proposal would require to be the subject of a formal environmental assessment.

2.5 Public Local Inquiry 1994

- 2.5.1** The Public Local Inquiry into objections to the Final Draft Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan were held 1994. The key issues in the Reporters report of the Inquiry as these relate to An Cams Mòr are set out in issue 33 An Camas Mòr (Appendix 12) are summarised below.

The Need for An Camas Mòr

- 2.5.2** The Reporter, in examining the need for development land, noted that the remaining capacity at housing sites in Aviemore identified in the Local Plan should enable much of the projected demand for housing to be met well into the 10-20 years life of the Local Plan. After 10 years it is likely that many of the housing allocation areas would be fully, or substantially, developed, and that there would be few remaining opportunities for development within these areas. At this stage sites other than those within Aviemore allocated for development in the Local Plan are liable to come under increasing development pressure.
- 2.5.3** The Reporter also noted that Highland Region Structure Plan (1990) required that population and housing growth be accommodated especially in and around Aviemore, and the Local Plan strategy is that Aviemore would remain the District's main growth point. The Reporter agreed with the Local Plan statement that Aviemore has the strongest economic prospects and was best located for the purposes of commuting from other areas. Given this, and the fact that the Local Plan looks forward to up to 20 years, it is appropriate that consideration is given to how the anticipated growth in the Aviemore area could be accommodated towards the end of the 20 year period, and even beyond that.
- 2.5.4** The Reporter also stated that there were serious constraints to development in Aviemore beyond the opportunities identified in the Local Plan. Further substantial incremental growth would be controversial, and in the Reporter's opinion, undesirable. The Reporter concluded that an obvious alternative would be to develop a new community in the Aviemore area but that this would not be required for a further 10 years, or thereby, that is, after 2005.

Bridges

- 2.5.5** The Reporter concluded that it was likely that there would be considerable pedestrian flow between An Camas Mòr and Aviemore by way of the proposed footbridge over the Spey during the hours of daylight. However he expressed the view that many pedestrians would be unenthusiastic about using this route during the hours of darkness. A road link would probably be lit and it would be busier, and to that extent it would be more attractive to pedestrians. The distance between the two centers would, though, almost certainly be perceived by most people as too far to walk on a regular basis. He therefore did not believe that the construction of a road bridge at Dalfaber would make a great difference to the functional relationship between Aviemore and Cambusmore and that, therefore, a new road bridge should not be a prerequisite of the development of An Camas Mòr.

Visual Effect

- 2.5.6** Regarding the visual effect of An Camas Mòr, particularly from the west and east including the A9 and the B970, the Reporter concluded firstly, that the buildings could be designed to minimise their impact on long views. He also noted the Estates view that the buildings should be finished in traditional materials, including slates, or tiles of similar appearance to slates, and built in small groups, in keeping with local tradition. Secondly, and more importantly, the development would be located within a woodland setting: most of it would be on land which is either already covered by commercial forestry or pine woodland, or on land which is programmed by the Estate for planting. After 25 years the trees would reach the height of about 9m. There are already significant areas planted with 5 and 15 year old trees. He also noted that the Estate envisages that houses would be of one and a half storey. These are generally about 6 m high, and can be easily screened by trees of this height; substantially higher buildings could be screened by fully mature trees. It would be necessary to provide and retain a substantial width of planting, particularly, but not exclusively, around the margins of the site. Planning agreements could be used to ensure that the woodland would be maintained around the development in perpetuity.
- 2.5.7** The Reporter also noted that the site is visible from the B970, although the north and south approaches are screened by established forestry plantations. It would be possible to screen most, if not all, of the development from views from the road and, in time, views to the west would be little different to those which would have existed if the site had been planted for commercial forestry.

Settlement Pattern

- 2.5.8** The Reporter concluded that the proposal would represent a fairly major change to the established settlement pattern of the strath but observed however, that change itself is not necessarily harmful. In so far as the development of An Camas Mòr would be associated with a re-focusing of Aviemore towards the Spey and the opening up of a major new recreation corridor along the river and its flood plain, it would have a beneficial impact on the settlement pattern.

Nature Conservation

2.5.9 The Reporter noted that the evidence at the inquiry did not suggest that the presence of badgers and otters in the area amounted to a powerful case against the proposed development. He concluded that steps would have to be taken to mitigate the impact of the development on these species and that nature conservation considerations would clearly be important matters at the environment assessment and master planning stages.

2.6 Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan 1997

2.6.1 The Highland Council's policy and support for the development of a new community at An Camas Mòr is set out in the adopted Badenoch & Strathspey Local Plan 1997 (See Planning Statement for detail).

2.7 An Camas Mòr Action Group 1999

2.7.1 During 1998 The Highland Council and the Estate discussed how best to progress An Camas Mòr. These discussions lead to the decision to establish an Action Group.

2.7.2 The Cambusmore Action Group first met in 1999 under the Chairmanship of The Highland Council with representatives of Rothiemurchus Estate. Scottish Natural Heritage and Moray, Badenoch and Strathspey Enterprise acted in a advisory capacity to the Action Group on issues which affected the natural heritage and local economy.

2.7.3 The Action Group set itself the task of preparing the background for a report which would set out the Vision for Cambusmore (An Camas Mòr), objectives both social, economic and environmental, opportunities and constraints, key components of the development, process and procedures, timescales, costs and risks/uncertainties.

2.7.4 The Action Group met three times. In the process of preparing the draft, meetings were held with The Highland Council, NOSWA, Scottish Homes and Scottish Hydro-Electric (Telecoms and Distribution).

2.8 Background Report

2.8.1 Subsequent to the final meeting of the Action Group in 1999, Rothiemurchus Estate prepared a Background Report to document and complete the work started by the Action Group, to gather together information for comment to ensure its accuracy, to identify any areas of misunderstanding in advance of commencing the formal processes, to provide a background for gauging the level of support for proceeding with the Feasibility Studies and Technical Document and to identify the Partnership necessary to take An Camas Mòr forward.