

CHAPTER 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

The process of preparing the Indicative Land Use Plan for An Camas Mòr has taken place over a considerable length of time; Environmental considerations and the examination of alternatives have been an essential and integral part of this process throughout.

The first sketch proposals were drawn up by The Highland Regional Council as part of a preliminary appraisal for the Aviemore Framework Plan in 1989. During 2004, the Feasibility Study established constraints and opportunities and the Technical Effectiveness Studies set out guiding principles, objectives and Indicative Land Use Plan strategies. The technical Effectiveness Studies also explored in detail three options selecting one on which to explore density, phasing and programme considerations.

From this work the Vision Statement was progressed in 2005 and 2006. This involved workshops with key stakeholders and wide public consultation resulting in detailed consideration of three further Indicative Land Use Plans of which one was selected to represent the Vision for An Camas Mòr that best met the aspirations of the Local Plan, those consulted, and Rothiemurchus Estate. The overall vision is of a small community with a compact footprint within a woodland setting with people living and working within a unique high quality natural environment which provides enjoyment of the surrounding landscape and natural heritage.

The Vision has been the subject of further study related to infrastructure effectiveness. This, along with further survey work, consultations, review and the continuing Environmental Impact Assessment process has suggested refinements to the Indicative Land Use Plan in an iterative manner.

The Indicative Land Use Plan coordinates all the various key principles and other layout considerations into an overall integrated land use plan. This plan defines the main development types and land uses for the site, and associated woodland / open space, school provision and their provision timescales. From the plan, the vehicular circulation pattern for the new community has then been developed. The Indicative Land Use Plan for Period D 2027 is the basis of the Outline Planning Application.

The Reporter to the 1994 local enquiry recommended that the site would benefit from some early planting of trees and this was carried out from 1997.

2.2 The Framework Plan 1989

2.2.1 In May 1989 the Planning Committee of Highland Regional Council authorised publication of a consultative document intended to inform continuing discussions with developers, landowners, the public and other interested parties. The

purpose of this non-statutory Framework Plan was to help guide subsequent decisions on planning applications and public sector investment priorities.

2.2.2 The Framework Plan included as assessment of the main development factors, and alternative expansion areas immediately adjoining the existing built up area of Aviemore. The principal major development areas identified were to the north of Aviemore and Dalfaber.

2.2.3 A Highland Regional Council Working Party was set up to meet with key parties and refine proposals. Comments from the public, local community organisations and Rothiemurchus Estate favored development east of the Spey, but at a location north of the Dell of Rothiemurchus a short distance south of An Camas Mòr. This was based on a visionary concept involving:

- re-focusing Aviemore itself outwards towards the river,
- the development of a new planned settlement on the eastern bank, and
- enhancement of the intervening major 'parkland' corridor, comprising the flood plain and adjoining open land, for leisure and amenity purposes.

2.2.4 The Dell of Rothiemurchus site was not progressed further by the Rothiemurchus Estate at the request of Highland Regional Council, because there were fundamental policy objections to large-scale development in an area defined as the Glenmore Corridor.

2.3 The Highland Council Study of Alternatives 1990

2.3.1 In 1990, in response to expressions of local support for development on the eastside of the Spey, The Highland Council prepared a Report for the Working Party on the potential for a new community at An Camas Mòr. In general, the Working Party favoured the idea of a separate new village and considered An Camas Mòr as a possible location.

2.3.2 The Highland Council's subsequent analysis indicated the nature of the terrain and existing land use at An Camas Mòr. In discussion Rothiemurchus Estate suggested a dormitory settlement, which could evolve into a small self-contained town using existing road links, possibly supplemented with a bridge crossing to Dalfaber in the longer term. Notwithstanding actual routes, road distances to key facilities in Aviemore would be greater than for other development options north of the village. However, construction of a footbridge connection would bring walking distances down to comparable levels with the other options. Three different options and related timescales were put forward i.e.

- (1) a new residential suburb
- (2) a free-standing new community