

7.12 SOCIO-ECONOMIC, COMMUNITY IMPACT & TOURISM and RECREATION

Introduction

7.12.1 This section provides an assessment of the potential Socio-Economic, Community, & Tourism and Recreation effects that could occur as a result of the development of the proposed project. The approach adopted in the preparation of this assessment includes a review and socio-economic and tourism profile of the existing baseline conditions in the survey area and the surrounding area. Key issues, trends and the performance of the local Aviemore economy and tourism relative to Badenoch & Strathspey and Scotland are outlined; factors influencing these conditions; and any direct and indirect effects of the proposed development. It also considers the potential impact of the proposed project upon the socio-economic, community, tourism and recreation, and business resources within the overall survey area.

Scope

7.12.2 The assessment was undertaken on the following basis and through the following stages: Baseline Assessment; Consultations; and Statement of Socio-Economic and Community Facility rationale.

Possible Effects and Inter-relationships

7.12.3 Several possible effects have been identified as relevant to the assessment of the effect on Socio-economic, Community Impact and Tourism and Recreation. No Inter-relationships have been identified.

Influence of Periods A-D

7.12.4 For the purpose of this assessment, consideration has been given to Assessment Periods A (2011) to D (2027), as indicated on the Indicative Land Use Plans.. The greatest impacts, and therefore significance, would be in the final phase, Phase D, that is, operation.

Consultations

7.12.5 Consultations were undertaken as follows:

- Identification of key consultees and local stakeholders, which were able to provide data, and their views upon key issues in the area;
- Consultation letter sent to consultees informing them of the background, purpose and remit, scope of the assessments, and seeking data and their views upon key issues in the area, and also the method of approach taken;

- The consultations to be undertaken on the basis of face to face, telephone, and email based discussions; and
- The responses of the consultees fed into both the baseline assessment and also contributed to the assessment of impact in terms of both quantitative and qualitative factors.

Study Area

7.12.6 The survey area for Socio-Economic and Community impact assessment of the proposed development was taken to be within the wider Aviemore and surrounding area. Tourism and recreation activities and facilities, and community facilities in the area were defined as being within a 10 km boundary from the proposed site of An Camas Mòr. This assessment area was defined on the basis that experience has shown that the visual significance of development within a landscape can be directly related to its proximity or distance from a given viewpoint, and that its visual significance decreases substantially at threshold points of 5 km and 10 km from a development. This 10 km boundary area includes the settlements of: Aviemore (c. 0.25km); Boat of Garten (c. 5km); Carrbridge (c. 9km); and Kinncraig (c. 9.5km).

Baseline Conditions

7.12.7 The following summarises the baseline conditions which apply to the wider area in Socio-Economic terms and frames the profile and format of the new community:

- Aviemore has a healthier population structure compared to Badenoch & Strathspey and Scotland;
- Aviemore also has a higher economic activity rate than both Badenoch & Strathspey and Scotland arising mainly from it's significantly higher level of people in full-time employment;
- However, despite its high economic activity rate the area has a higher unemployment rate compared to Badenoch & Strathspey and Scotland;
- The economy is relatively narrow compared with Scotland as a whole, and broadly similar to Badenoch & Strathspey although it is more dependent on key tourism sectors;
- According to the Cairngorms National Park's Strategy and Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism "tourism related businesses are estimated to account for 80% of the economy";
- Aviemore has a high proportion of elementary jobs which are generally low paid and do not require significant levels of skill or qualifications;

- Aviemore has a notably higher proportion of rented accommodation relative to Badenoch & Strathspey and Scotland;
- Educational attainment levels in Aviemore are weaker than Badenoch & Strathspey and Scotland, but would be improved by the retention of the educated population and skills through the provision of higher value jobs and affordable housing via An Camas Mòr; and
- At a wider level, Badenoch & Strathspey Council area is the least deprived in the highlands with zero data zones in the most deprived 20%.

7.12.8 In summary, the economy of the Aviemore / Speyside area is characterised by a lower income profile with an above average dependency upon tourism and leisure, hotels and catering, and land based / estate orientated employment, and a lower than average representation of personal and professional services.

7.12.9 This is set within the context of the recognition by Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) in the Park Plan that an “increasing proportion of economic activity will be based on the special qualities of the Park” with a 5 year outcome resulting in an increase in employment in lower wage sectors of tourism, land-based, and food & drink.

7.12.10 However of key significance are the jobs potentially available in the area and their mismatch with the lack of locally available skilled and appropriate labour, largely as a result of the current lack of local affordable housing.

Designations

7.12.11 There are no Socio-Economic, Community, Tourism or Recreation designations in the study area.

Key Considerations

7.12.12 The key considerations of the assessment are:

- to determine the socio-economic profile, and the associated issues, taking account of the local, regional, and Scottish context;
- to determine the nature of the tourism and visitor resources, and the associated tourism issues, taking account of the regional, Scottish, and wider context;
- to identify the principal socio-economic, community and tourism and recreation effects (both positive and negative) that may result from the proposed project and assess the significance of these effects;
- to recommend measures for preventing, reducing and offsetting any identified significant adverse effects, and / or enhancing any beneficial effects where possible.

Assessment Methodology

7.12.13 The assessment of socio-economic and community impacts examines the key aspects and issues within the area's economy. It then outlines the position of the immediate and surrounding area where the development would take place, providing a base against which any future impacts and effects from the development can be measured.

7.12.14 The following areas were considered in the socio-economic assessment:

- Population structure;
- Labour market structure;
- Industry of employment;
- Occupational profiles;
- Wage rates;
- Education profiles;
- Household tenure;
- Deprivation;
- Migration;
- Population projections; and
- Household projections.

7.12.15 In assessing the tourist, visitor and recreational facilities within the study area, it is those which register most frequently or readily within tourist or visitor websites, brochures, guidebooks, and other media that are taken here to represent the principal tourism resources in the area. This is a standard approach taken as a proxy for tourists or other visitors assessing the potential attraction of an area. Therefore, we have set out the principal attractions, festivals and events, walking and cycling routes, and other facilities.

Effects

7.12.16 In summary the overall effects, as a result of the proposed development, are as follows.

Socio-economic and Business Impacts

- Increase in population;

- Enhanced turn over for new business;
- Increase in recruitment of staff to new business;
- Increased demand for housing;
- Increased demand for affordable housing;
- Greater use of community facilities;
- Increase in community activities;
- Increase in education attainment due to the enhancement of the employment market; and
- Increased marketing opportunities in the local area.

Overall Socio-Economic Benefits

7.12.17 The overall quantitative socio-economic benefits derived from the development of An Camas Mòr, have been assessed and estimated within the An Camas Mòr Socio Economic impact report, and are set out in Table 7.12 below, which would make a significant positive contribution to the prosperity and wellbeing of both the Badenoch & Strathspey area and the Highlands.

Table 7.12: Overall Additional Quantitative Socio-Economic Impacts

Socio-Economic Impact	Total
Gross Jobs (FTEs)	1,728
Net Additional Local Jobs (FTEs) – TTWA	1,171
Net Additional Local Jobs (FTEs) – Scotland	1,330
Growth in GVA – TTWA (per annum)	£16.4-21.4m
Growth in GVA – Scotland (per annum)	£18.6-24.3m
Tax Revenue – Business (per annum)	£1.148m

Socio-Economic Impact	Total
Tax Revenue – Residential (per annum)	£3.124m
Retained Retail Expenditure (per annum)	£2.942m
Affordable Housing (units)	375
Construction Jobs (FTEs)	N/A
Private Sector Investment (£m)	N/A

Tourism and Recreation Impacts

7.12.18

- Increase in use of tourist and recreational facilities; and
- Increase in tourist numbers.

Significant of Effects

7.12.19 There are potentially significant beneficial impacts for a range of economic, community, tourist and recreation receptors. Overall there would be a potentially moderate to major positive, that is, a significant beneficial impact, on employment numbers and new business. There would be a minor negative, that is a not significant adverse impact, on tourism and recreation and minor positive, that is not significant beneficial, impact on recreational facilities. Full details of the potential impacts related to construction and operational periods are given in Volume 2 Chapter 9 Section 10 Socio-Economic, Community & Tourism and Recreation.

Mitigation

7.12.20 The following mitigation measures are proposed for the settlement.

Construction Mitigation

7.12.21 Construction of An Camas Mòr would be programmed wherever practicable to avoid particularly sensitive locations, tourist / visitor viewpoints, and corridors at peak visitor or tourist periods, and this would act as mitigation of the effect of the proposals. Where possible, construction would be programmed to avoid

significant construction traffic on key routes in the proximity of festivals and events of note.

- 7.12.22** The contractors would be required to ensure ongoing safe access to all key walking and cycling routes, etc, and provide an alternative if any route was closed temporarily due to construction activities.
- 7.12.23** In terms of the development of the community, every effort would be taken in ensuring that local businesses can be offered the opportunity of participation in its construction, to retain economic benefit and spending locally, and to provide training and job opportunities for local enterprise. This would be a subject for further consideration as the means of procurement are considered and developed.
- 7.12.24** Construction mitigation would be monitored by the CNPA as part of the planning consent, attached conditions, and legal agreement.

Permanent Mitigation

- 7.12.25** An Camas Mòr would be 'micro-sited' to minimise tourism or recreation effects in areas of particular sensitivity or views, by using the natural features in the landscape to minimise impacts upon tourist / visitors' views.
- 7.12.26** The socio-economic rationale for the community is one of a high quality living, working, and playing environment, with extensive opportunities for living and working in close proximity, and to minimise the need for commuting into and out of the community. The provision of employment space is intended to maximise local living and working opportunities, and minimise the need for commuting. In addition, the rationale of the diversified economic nature of the community would assist the local business and general community in providing a more robust economy and one more resilient to economic pressures.
- 7.12.27** The assessment tests the Local Plan proposal that the development would include the provision of space for housing, social and community facilities, commercial, business uses and recreation. This would result in a lower than average level of daily commuting by car.
- 7.12.28** Further, the provision of affordable housing in An Camas Mòr would address the difficulties within the local labour market of a shortage of appropriate and affordable housing to accommodate the local labour force. Leading to both reductions in the need to commute to work in the Aviemore/An Camas Mòr area, and also in reducing further pressure for housing development in the Badenoch & Strathspey part of the National Park.
- 7.12.29** It is also intended that the ethos of the development, focussing upon sustainable development principles, energy efficiency and good practice, would not only assist in reducing the environmental impact of the community upon the wider National Park, but also provide economic and job opportunities for the local population and enhance business investment locally.

Significance of Residual Effects

7.12.30 The following residual effects have been identified from the development of An Camas Mòr.

Minor Negative / Adverse

- Increased use of the surrounding woodland / forest (particularly outside the main holiday seasons) would increase the interaction with forest operations and could have an impact on the costs of managing health & safety;
- Increased use of the public roads would lead to a greater interaction with forestry vehicles which could lead to restrictions in their use;
- Increased use of the woodland / forests for recreation could lead to greater environmental disturbance; and
- Increased use of the path network (particularly in poor weather conditions) could lead to increased maintenance costs.

Minor Positive

- Increased use of the woodland / forest could lead to increased income from recreational businesses based in the forest.

Major Positive

- Increased affordable housing stock would assist staff of local businesses in finding local accommodation.

Minor-Moderate Positive

- Enhanced turnover from new business supported by the new population of An Camas Mòr and visitors attracted to the area by the development.
- Increased turnover and positive impacts upon the recruitment of staff through new population and provision of affordable housing alleviating the shortage of skilled labour.

Major Positive

- Increased affordable housing stock would assist staff of local businesses in finding local accommodation.
- Increased turnover and positive residual impact upon local business.

Summary

- 7.12.31** In conclusion, the development of An Camas Mòr would not have any significant negative/adverse residual socio-economic, tourism and recreation, or community facilities effects upon the local Aviemore, or wider Badenoch & Strathspey, or National Park area or communities. On the contrary the proposed development would focus upon the unique opportunity afforded by An Camas Mòr in addressing the need for both affordable housing, and the attraction of higher income employment in the central Highlands.
- 7.12.32** Through the creation of a well planned settlement, and high quality of life, the proposed development would assist in the retention of the higher educated population which has historically left the area for jobs elsewhere. It would also attract new skills and economically active population to generate new and additional jobs, raise income levels, offer the opportunity to transform perceptions, attract new investment, and also offer prospects of expansion for existing businesses.
- 7.12.33** The effects experienced by socio-economic and community, and tourism and recreation resources, are detailed in the Appendices.

7.13 CUMULATIVE AND INTER-RELATED EFFECTS

Geology & Soils

- 7.13.1** An assessment for cumulative effects for Geology & soils is not considered to be appropriate.

Landscape Resource

- 7.13.2** The Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan (1997) and the Cairngorms Deposit Local Plan were examined in terms of proposals that would along with An Camas Mòr have the potential to cumulatively affect the Landscape Resource. It was concluded that an assessment of cumulative effect was not applicable.

Visual Amenity

- 7.13.3** The Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan (1997) and the Cairngorms Deposit Local Plan were examined in terms of proposals that would along with An Camas Mòr have the potential to cumulatively affect the Landscape Resource. It was concluded that an assessment of cumulative effect was not applicable.

Ecology and Nature Conservation

- 7.13.4** The total effects of the four development periods for construction and operation of An Camas Mòr have been assessed within the ecology impact assessment.