

on the site and supplement this with new tree planting, would ensure that in the period beyond that included within this assessment, that is beyond 2027, the longer term effect of the proposed new community would gradually reduce.

Wider Landscape Setting

7.4.45 Whilst the introduction of An Camas Mòr would result in localised significant effects on landscape character, which would be limited to two LLCAs, any effects associated with its introduction in relation to the landscape character of the wider 'Speyside' LCA, the other LCAs which form the wider setting to the An Camas Mòr site and the landscape character of the Cairngorms National Park would not be considered to be significant. Equally, no effects on The Cairngorm Mountains NSA are considered to be significant. Whilst important in local landscape character terms, the site of An Camas Mòr and its immediate surroundings are not considered to make a major contribution to the overall character and distinctive landscapes of the Cairngorms National Park, and form only a small part of the wider 'Speyside' LCA, where settlements form part of the key characteristics of the LCA. Therefore, the introduction of An Camas Mòr would have only a slight adverse effect on the landscape character of the 'Speyside' LCA, the Cairngorms National Park and The Cairngorm Mountains NSA and no effect on the landscape character of the other LCAs of the wider setting, and which would be considered not significant.

7.5 EFFECT ON VISUAL AMENITY

Introduction

7.5.1 This summary outlines the findings of the assessment of the proposed new community at An Camas Mòr on visual amenity.

7.5.2 Visual amenity is defined as:

- The assembly of components which provide an attractive visual setting or backcloth for activities.

Scope

7.5.3 The scope of this assessment considers the likely effect of An Camas Mòr on visual amenity. Consideration is given to the baseline visual characteristics of the site and its surrounding area, patterns of theoretical visibility of An Camas Mòr are considered and a series of viewpoints are selected from which to assess the visual effect of the introduction of An Camas Mòr over different time periods. Each selected viewpoint is considered in relation to its location and users, the existing visual amenity and how this would change through the introduction of An Camas Mòr, and an assessment of the level of visual effect which this would have on the viewpoint is undertaken for each of four different assessment time periods.

Possible Effects and Inter-relationships

7.5.4 Several possible effects and Inter-relationships have been identified as relevant to the assessment of the effect on Visual Amenity. Table 7.11 lists the various effects and Inter-relationships with the Environmental Impact Assessment topics. Possible Inter-relationships have been identified with the Landscape Resource, Ecology and Nature Conservation, Cultural Heritage and Night Lighting.

Influence of Periods A-D on Assessment Process

7.5.5 The assessment of the effect of the proposed new community is considered at four separate stages of the proposed development process, related to the phasing set out in the Local Plan and Indicative Land Use Plans (Volume 2 Chapter 9 Annex A Figure 10 and Chapter 5 Figures 5.2 to 5.5). The key assessment stages in the proposed development process are:

- Assessment Period A – 2011, with the completion of 100 units in total;
- Assessment Period B – 2016, with the completion of 400 units in total;

- Assessment Period C – 2018, with the completion of 600 units in total; and

- Assessment Period D – 2027, with the completion of 1500 units in total.

7.5.6 Additionally, although not part of the Environmental Impact Assessment, an indication is given of the level of effect for the period 2070, when existing tree planting would be reaching full maturity and new tree planting undertaken during Assessment Period A would have reached a height of 20 m.

Consultations

7.5.7 The following consultations were undertaken:

- 2nd October - Cairngorms National Park Authority Landscape Officer and The Highland Council Landscape Officer. A note of the meeting is contained within the Report of Scoping Consultations. The key points discussed were:
 - four assessment periods related to the development of the proposed new community;
 - Assessment to be transparent and clear in its assessments and conclusions;
 - Importance of open space design within overall layout of new community; and
 - Agreement of viewpoints to be used.
- 21st November 2008 – Cairngorms National Park Authority staff – to present initial assessment conclusions, 3D model of proposed

development and outline visualisations and receive feedback The main issues raised were;

- The need for more connectivity within the development in terms of tree cover and open spaces, to assist in reducing impact and the need to test different layout scenarios;
- 11th December 2008 - Cairngorms National Park Authority Landscape Officer to present revised 3D model and visualisations and to receive feedback. The meeting reaffirmed the need for further consideration of tree cover and pattern within the new community;
- 6th January 2009 - Cairngorms National Park Authority Landscape Officer to present revised 3D model and visualisations and to receive feedback. A note of CNPA's response is included in the Report of Scoping Consultations.

The Study Area

7.5.8 The Study Area used for the assessment of effect on visual amenity extends approximately 10 km from the boundary of the site of An Camas Mòr. This extent of Study Area has been used for the generation of Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) maps which indicate the spread and pattern of theoretical visibility of An Camas Mòr. These maps were then utilised in the selection of specific viewpoints for detailed visual assessment. Whilst it may be possible that An Camas Mòr would be visible at distances in excess of 10 km, it is considered that any associated visual effects beyond this distance would not be significant.

Baseline Conditions

Overview of the An Camas Mòr Visual Context and Character

7.5.9 An Camas Mòr, is located within the 10,000 hectare Rothiemurchus Estate, to the east of Aviemore between the River Spey and the watershed of the Cairngorm Mountains, within the Cairngorms National Park and on the northern edge of The Cairngorm Mountains National Scenic Area (NSA). This is an area of considerable scenic quality, resulting from the contrasts between the humanised straths of agricultural policies and woodlands, the vast remnants of the Caledonian Forests which cover the foothills and the sweeping granite mountain plateau of The Cairngorm Mountains.

7.5.10 This area exhibits a diverse range of visual characters, from the densely enclosed forest and woodland landscapes, where views are considerably limited, to the rising foothills and mountains beyond which provide uninterrupted panoramas over the wider landscape. From within Strathspey, views tend to be either along the line of the River Spey or over a foreground of forest and

woodland to the backcloth of the mountain plateaux of the Cairngorms. To the west, the steep flank of the Monadhliath Mountains tends to limit views, creating a strong sense of enclosure to this side of Strathspey and directing views eastwards or north and south along the Spey. Along the river corridor, a diverse mix of woodlands, farmlands, policies and built development creates a visual contrast against the more uniform and simple forest and mountain landscapes beyond.

- 7.5.11** In visual terms, the wooded flanks of the Cairngorm Mountains form a crucial setting to the open and bare mountain massif, whilst the lower straths are significantly enhanced by the rising forests and their mountain backdrop. This rich diversity of landscape types of the area combine to create an area of considerable scenic attractiveness and visual interest, with the scenery associated with both the Cairngorms and Rothiemurchus being celebrated from the 19th century onwards. This is recognised by the site of An Camas Mòr being located with the Cairngorm National Park as well as within The Cairngorm Mountains National Scenic Area (NSA). The area continues to act as a magnet to visitors for a wide range of passive and active recreation activities.
- 7.5.12** Built development is concentrated in Aviemore to the west of the Spey and a few small hamlets and communities such as Inverdrue, Coylumbridge and Glenmore to the east of the Spey. Beyond Aviemore and these other communities, population distribution is very limited, with only a few isolated farms and cottages, mostly set within areas of woodland. Given the extensive woodland pattern throughout the area, and the predominantly low height of most buildings, very few buildings form focal features within the local environment. The exception is the MacDonald Four Season Hotel in Aviemore, which due to its height and contrast against its wooded backdrop appears as a prominent feature from within the wider landscape. To the south, the Duke of Gordon's Monument and the wooded hill of Ord Ban form prominent focal features within the river corridor.
- 7.5.13** The area has a very limited communication pattern, which either follows the general north-south route of Strathspey, or utilises limited crossing points of the river to head east towards the Cairngorms. The A9 trunk road passes to the west of Aviemore, whilst the historic north-south road route and the railway pass through Aviemore itself, all on the west side of the River Spey. At the southern end of Aviemore, the B970 crosses the river and links through Inverdrue and Coylumbridge, before heading north along the eastern boundary of the An Camas Mòr site. A road heads east from Coylumbridge to Glenmore and the ski facilities on Cairngorm. All of these routes provide access for both locals and visitors throughout the area, and provide the major method by which people experience the visual character of the area.
- 7.5.14** From these communication routes, an extensive series of paths and cycleways extend into the forests and onto the mountains, providing an extensive access network throughout the area. As these routes rise from within the forests and woodlands onto the open moorland and mountains, they provide extensive panoramas over the surrounding area, contrasting with the enclosure and visual containment experienced within the forests.

Designations

7.5.15 There are several Designations relevant to Visual Amenity of the area within which the proposed development is located:

- The Cairngorms National Park; and
- The Cairngorm Mountains National Scenic Area.

Key Considerations

7.5.16 The key considerations in relation to Visual Amenity are:

- Impact on daytime visual amenity.

7.5.17 The possible impacts on which the key considerations for the assessment are based are:

- Visibility from settlements;
- Visibility from roads and cycle ways; and
- Visibility from footpaths particularly from elevated viewpoints.

Assessment Methodology

7.5.18 The assessment methodology adopted for this assessment is described in Volume 2, Chapter 9 Appendix A. The key components are:

- Establishing the baseline conditions of the existing visual character of the study area concerned, together with its sensitivity to change in the context of the development proposed;
- Establishing the extent of theoretical visibility of the proposed development within the study area;
- Selecting representative viewpoints which have theoretical visibility with the proposed development from which to undertake visual assessment;
- Determining the magnitude of change to the baseline conditions of the selected viewpoints resulting from the introduction of the proposed development;
- Determining the nature and significance of any likely effects on the baseline conditions, resulting from the changes identified;
- Consideration of any mitigation measures to prevent, reduce and where possible offset any significant effects identified; and

- Description of any residual significant effects.

Effects

7.5.19 To determine the effects of the proposed development on Visual Amenity, the extent of the constructed development was based on the layout and building heights shown on the Indicative Land Use Plans for Periods A (2011) to D (2027) and the 3D model corresponding to these plans, building and tree height information. For each Period the effects on Settlements, Roads and Footpaths and Other Recreational Locations were assessed (Volume 2 Chapter 9 Section 3 Sub-section 3.7).

Significance of Effects at Assessment Periods

Zone of Theoretical Visibility Maps

7.5.20 ZTV maps are determined by computer based visibility analysis software, which identifies locations from which some part of the proposed new community would be theoretically visible. These ZTV maps utilise a combination of 'bare ground' and 'with trees' models to indicate the theoretical extent and pattern of visibility of An Camas Mòr within its visual context. As such, the 'with trees' model is particularly useful in demonstrating the potentially important role of woodland screening to the overall visibility of An Camas Mòr. The 'bare ground' map takes no account of the potential screening role of woodlands and therefore represent a 'worst case' theoretical visibility scenario for An Camas Mòr, whereas the 'with trees' ZTVs indicate the influence which existing and proposed woodlands and tree blocks have on the overall theoretical visibility pattern of An Camas Mòr over the assessment periods.

7.5.21 Comparison of the 'bare ground' and 'with trees' ZTVs indicates the important role that existing and proposed woodlands and tree belts play in reducing and limiting the spread of theoretical visibility of An Camas Mòr. The overall spread and pattern of theoretical visibility for the 'with trees' ZTVs all indicate a substantial reduction in the extent and spread of visibility of An Camas Mòr throughout the study area, compared with the 'bare ground' ZTV, emphasising the important role that woodlands and tree belts play in screening views to An Camas Mòr and contributing to its woodland setting. This in turn indicates the importance of the long term management and retention of the general woodland and tree belt cover on and around the site of An Camas Mòr, to continue and sustain the important screening role which these trees play. A statement on woodland management for the Rothiemurchus Estate is contained in the Indicative Land Use Plan Strategies Document. Equally, the ZTVs for Assessment Periods A, B and C all indicate a very similar pattern and spread of theoretical visibility, with Assessment Period D showing only a slight increase in the extent of visibility and some additional areas of theoretical visibility, predominantly in areas reasonably close to the An Camas Mòr site.

Selection of Viewpoints for Assessment

7.5.22 Using a desk-based analysis of OS maps of the An Camas Mòr site and its surrounding context, an initial series of potential viewpoints for visual assessment were selected. This selection aimed to identify popular locations, such as roads, local hilltops and viewpoints and other attractions/features where it might be likely that views to An Camas Mòr would be available. This selection identified locations based on different orientations, elevations and distances, in order to provide a representative range of viewpoints from where An Camas Mòr might be seen by both locals and visitors.

7.5.23 Consultation with CNPA and THC, using the draft viewpoint list and the ZTV plans and a series of panoramic photographs from the draft viewpoints, resulted in confirmation of the list of viewpoints below for visual assessment (Figure 7.6 – Viewpoint Location List).

Table 7.6: Viewpoint Location List

Viewpoint Number	Location	Reason for Selection	Grid reference	Altitude AOD
1	B970: North end of An Camas Mòr site	Local road and national cycle route adjacent to site	291374 813020	225m
2	B970: Vicinity of Guislich Farm access road	Local road and national cycle route adjacent to site	291241 812144	220m
3	Rothiemurchus Fishery	Local tourist attraction providing views from the south	289823 811547	209m
4	Aviemore Station – pedestrian bridge over railway	Major facility in village offering elevated view eastwards towards site	289561 812267	216m
5	Ski Road – Approach to Cairngorm Ski Centre	Important visitor route providing panorama over wide area	298700 807045	552m
6	Upper Tullochgrue	Local road offering elevated view over wide area	291175 809361	313m
7	Summit of Ord Ban	Locally important focal feature offering elevated views along Strathspey	289167 808501	425m
8	Craigellachie	Elevated viewpoint on west side of Spey valley offering views eastwards – popular due to National Nature Reserve status	288121 812408	492m

Viewpoint Number	Location	Reason for Selection	Grid reference	Altitude AOD
9	Highburnside	Recent housing development west of A9 offering views eastwards over Aviemore	289186 814121	251m
10	Pityoulish Crag	Locally important elevated viewpoint close to site	292845 813303	437m
11	Dalfaber Lodges/Golf Course	Residential and recreation area on west side of River Spey	290664 813263	213m
12	Speyside Way	Long distance walkway and adjacent to Strathspey Railway Line offering views southwards	291459 815601	233m
13	Craiggowrie Summit	Locally popular elevated viewpoint offering views westwards over site and wider area	296281 813490	683m

Note: all viewpoints are located within the Cairngorms National Park. All viewpoints are within The Cairngorm Mountains NSA, with the exception of Craigellachie, Speyside Way and Highburnside.

7.5.24 The assessment of visual effect on the selected viewpoints for the four assessment periods and also for 2070 is presented in Table 7.7 below.

Table 7.7: Summary of Assessment of Visual Effect on Selected Viewpoints

Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Effect at Assessment Period A	Effect at Assessment Period B	Effect at Assessment Period C	Effect at Assessment Period D	Indication of Effect at 2070
1 B970: North end of An Camas Mòr site	Medium	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	Not Significant (Slight Adverse)	No Effect
2 B970: Vicinity of Guislich Farm access road	Medium	Significant (Substantial) Adverse	Significant (Substantial) Adverse	Significant (Substantial) Adverse	Significant (Moderate) Adverse	Significant (Moderate) Adverse
3 Rothiemurchus Fishery	Medium	No Effect	No Effect	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse
4 Aviemore Station – pedestrian bridge over railway	Medium	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect

Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Effect at Assessment Period A	Effect at Assessment Period B	Effect at Assessment Period C	Effect at Assessment Period D	Indication of Effect at 2070
5 Ski Road – Approach to Cairngorm Ski Centre	High	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	No Effect
6 Upper Tullochgrue	Medium	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	No Effect
7 Summit of Ord Ban	High	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Significant (Moderate) Adverse	Significant (Moderate) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse
8 Craigellachie	High	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Significant (Moderate) Adverse	Significant (Moderate) Adverse	Significant (Substantial) Adverse	Significant (Moderate) Adverse
9 Highburnside	Medium	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	No Effect	No Effect
10 Pityoulish Crag	High	Significant (Moderate) Adverse	Significant (Substantial) Adverse	Significant (Substantial) Adverse	Significant (Moderate) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse
11 Dalfaber Lodges/Golf Course	Medium	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	Not Significant (Slight)

Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Effect at Assessment Period A	Effect at Assessment Period B	Effect at Assessment Period C	Effect at Assessment Period D	Indication of Effect at 2070
12 Speyside Way	High	No Effect	No Effect	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	No Effect
13 Craiggowrie summit	High	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Significant (Moderate) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse

Note: moderate and substantial effects are considered to be significant.

Mitigation

7.5.25 Significant adverse effects have been identified on particular selected viewpoints as part of the assessment process, and therefore potential mitigation measures require to be considered for these areas.

Viewpoint 2

7.5.26 Viewpoint 2 (B970: Vicinity of Guislich Farm access road) is located immediately adjacent to the site of An Camas Mòr, close to the eastern end of the High Street and therefore there would inevitably be considerable changes to, and associated effects on, the visual character of the view as a result of the introduction of the proposed new community, associated with both the introduction of new buildings at the east end of the High Street and alterations to the alignment and layout of the B970. The close proximity of these changes to the viewpoint location, and the magnitude of change from a strongly rural character to one where new buildings would form a dominant feature in the view, are the main contributors to the significant effect identified at this viewpoint.

7.5.27 During the assessment process, consideration by An Camas Mòr, LLP and the Masterplan Architects of these factors led to a reconsideration of the proposed layout and relationship of the buildings at the east end of the High Street in relation to the B970. Consequently, a revised Indicative Land Use Plan was developed for this area (Chapter 5 Figures 5.2 to 5.5), which relocated proposed buildings further away from the B970, allowing a 30m width of existing tree planting adjacent to the B970 to be retained, as well as reducing the overall building heights in this area to 2.5 storeys for the proposed hotel and 1.5 storeys for the information centre. These modifications to the ILUP were introduced into a revised version of the 3D model, and a revised assessment undertaken.

7.5.28 Comparison of the initial design proposal (Volume 2 Chapter 9 Annex A Figure 10) when seen from Viewpoint 2 with the revised proposal (Volume 1 Chapter 5 Figures 5.2 to 5.5 and Volume 2 Chapter 9 Annex A Figures 4 to 7), demonstrates the role that the retention of existing trees along the west side of the B970 plays in screening the proposed buildings at the east end of the High Street. This, together with relocating these buildings further back from the B970, and reducing their height, makes a considerable contribution to reducing the overall level of effect on this viewpoint. Whilst the road realignment and roundabout proposals remain constant between the initial and revised proposals, these design modifications to building locations and heights would be effective in reducing the levels of effect at all stages of the assessment, and that by Assessment Period D, the level of effect predicted would be reduced from substantial adverse and significant to slight adverse, and therefore not significant.

Other Viewpoints

7.5.29 From local elevated viewpoints, within the early assessment stages, the buildings which would be visible tend to merge into a densely developed, tightly grouped pattern of buildings, where the effect of internal tree belts and other tree planting is limited in breaking down the scale of the overall development. By 2027, it is considered that this internal pattern of tree planting would not be effective in terms of scale within the higher and medium density zones to reduce the effect of these areas on these viewpoints, due to lack of growth, although the combination of retained existing trees and newly planted trees within the lower density zones would be contributing positively to the woodland setting and character of these areas, and would break down the overall scale and extent of development in these areas and their associated visibility. Beyond 2027, further tree growth would increase and reinforce the woodland setting character of the new community, such that the level of effect on these viewpoints would gradually reduce over time. By 2070, when existing trees would have reached maturity and new planting would be 20m in height, it is considered that the only remaining significant effects on the selected viewpoints would be at Viewpoint 8, the other viewpoints reducing from significant to not significant effects during this period.

7.5.30 It is the roofscape and upper sections of the buildings which would form the most visible component of An Camas Mòr within views from the elevated viewpoints. In terms of visibility of buildings from these locations, it is recognised that the masterplan report proposes a range of measures regarding materials for roofs and elevations which aim to play down the visibility and therefore impact of these from elevated views. Roofs would be formed in matt, dark grey non-reflective materials to minimise glare and reflection, whilst elevations would be predominantly of timber, harling or local stone, using a natural earthy colour scheme. White coloured buildings would be avoided. These committed measures would assist in reducing the actual visibility of buildings within these elevated views and minimising their impact.

7.5.31 It is considered that no further mitigation measures are feasible or appropriate to consider in terms of preventing, reducing and where possible offsetting the significant adverse effects which have been identified for Viewpoint 8. It is noted however, at Viewpoint 8, that the proposed parkland corridor between An Camas

Mòr and the River Spey, which is not part of this development proposal, could affect the level of overall effect at this viewpoint, such that the level of effect would reduce to slight adverse effect, and not significant, at 2070.

Significance of Residual Effects

7.5.32 The residual effects of the proposed new community are those outlined in Table 7.8 below.

Table 7.8: Summary of Assessment of Residual Visual Effect on Selected Viewpoints

Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Effect at Assessment Period A	Effect at Assessment Period B	Effect at Assessment Period C	Effect at Assessment Period D	Indication of Effect at 2070
1 B970: North end of An Camas Mòr site	Medium	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	No Effect
2 B970: Vicinity of Guislich Farm access road	Medium	Significant (Moderate) Adverse	Significant (Moderate) Adverse	Significant (Moderate) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse
3 Rothiemurchus Fishery	Medium	No Effect	No Effect	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse
4 Aviemore Station – pedestrian bridge over railway	Medium	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect
5 Ski Road – Approach to Cairngorm Ski Centre	High	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	No Effect
6 Upper Tullochgrue	Medium	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	No Effect
7 Summit of Ord Ban	High	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Significant (Moderate) Adverse	Significant (Moderate) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse
8 Craigellachie	High	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Significant (Moderate) Adverse	Significant (Moderate) Adverse	Significant (Substantial) Adverse	Significant (Moderate) Adverse

Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Effect at Assessment Period A	Effect at Assessment Period B	Effect at Assessment Period C	Effect at Assessment Period D	Indication of Effect at 2070
9 Highburnside	Medium	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	No Effect	No Effect
10 Pityoulish Crag	High	Significant (Moderate) Adverse	Significant (Substantial) Adverse	Significant (Substantial) Adverse	Significant (Moderate) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse
11 Dalfaber Lodges/Golf Course	Medium	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse
12 Speyside Way	High	No Effect	No Effect	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	No Effect
13 Craiggowrie summit	High	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Significant (Moderate) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse	Not Significant (Slight) Adverse

Note: moderate and substantial effects are considered to be significant.

Summary

Effect on Settlements

7.5.33 It is recognised that the introduction of a new community at An Camas Mòr would result in some changes to existing views. However, existing and proposed woodland and tree planting on the An Camas Mòr site and within its surrounding area play an important role in screening the proposed new community, during the various assessment periods and beyond. The spread and pattern of visibility of the proposed new community would be limited and fragmented within the wider landscape, as indicated by the 'with trees' ZTV plans, and generally would not correspond with existing settlements within the surrounding area. The importance of the screening role of tree planting is recognised both within the Indicative Land Use Plan layout as well as within the Rothiemurchus Estate Forest Plan, where the primary objective is to increase the general woodland cover over a 20 year period and to retain the generally wooded character of the An Camas Mòr site and its wider setting beyond the lifetime of the development of the new community. This approach would ensure that the visual effect of An Camas Mòr is limited within the immediate and wider landscape, through the perpetuation of the general wooded character of the area. Given the above considerations, it is considered that An Camas Mòr would have a slight adverse effect on visual amenity of settlements and would therefore be considered not significant.

Effect on Roads and Cycleways

7.5.34 Existing and proposed woodland and tree planting on the An Camas Mòr site and within its surrounding area plays an important role in screening the proposed new community, during the various assessment periods and beyond. The spread and pattern of visibility of the proposed new community would be limited and fragmented within the wider landscape, as indicated by the ‘with trees’ ZTV plans, and generally would not correspond with major roads including the A9 within the surrounding area. Viewpoint 2 (B970 in the vicinity of Guislich Farm) is located immediately adjacent to the site of An Camas Mòr, and whilst a significant effect would occur throughout Assessment Periods A-C, this level of effect would reduce to not significant at Assessment Period D and beyond. Given the above considerations, it is considered that An Camas Mòr would have a slight adverse effect on visual amenity of roads and cycleways and would therefore be considered not significant.

Effect on Footpaths and Other Recreation Locations

7.5.35 Assessment of the selected viewpoints indicates that significant adverse effects would only occur from a limited number of local elevated viewpoints in the vicinity of An Camas Mòr, where views would be available over the tops of the surrounding woodlands and tree groups and into the actual site of the proposed new community. For the majority of selected viewpoints within this category assessed, existing trees and proposed woodland buffer zones play an important role in limiting the visibility of the proposed new community and therefore minimising any visual effect, through a combination of either direct screening of the proposed new community within views, limiting the extent of the development which would be visible or through forming a wider and complex woodland pattern within which the proposed new community would form a minor component of the view. Significant adverse effects would occur within the assessment periods at the key elevated viewpoints of Ord Ban (7), Craigellachie (8) and Pityoulish Crag (10). By Assessment Period D, tree planting would be effective in the lower density areas in reducing the visual effect of these areas from these viewpoints, although the medium and higher density areas would still be visible within these views. Beyond Assessment Period D at 2027, further tree growth within the proposed new community would assist in reducing the overall level of visual effect from these viewpoints, and by 2070, the level of effect at these viewpoints would be not significant. Whilst Viewpoint 13 – Craiggowrie summit would have a significant effect during Assessment Period C, the effect of tree growth during Assessment Period D would reduce this to a not significant effect in 2027. Considering the above factors, it is concluded that An Camas Mòr would have a slight adverse effect on the visual amenity of footpaths and other recreation locations and would therefore be considered not significant.

7.6 EFFECT ON ECOLOGY AND NATURE CONSERVATION

Introduction

- 7.6.1** The Technical Appendix provides the essential baseline information on ecology and nature conservation of relevance to the proposed An Camas Mòr development. It also provides a full assessment of the predicted effects of the proposed An Camas Mòr development on sensitive ecological receptors (*i.e.* habitats, flora and fauna) to a level of detail well beyond that normally associated with an Outline Planning Application.
- 7.6.2** One of the key overarching aims of the design and assessment process for An Camas Mòr has been, and would continue to be, to avoid significant impacts on important ecological receptors. Impacts have been avoided through the iterative development design process. Where avoidance of impacts has not been possible they have been minimised and proposals to create and enhance habitats of nature conservation interest that would be affected by the development have been proposed.

Scope

- 7.6.3** The scope of the assessment for ecology and nature conservation has been influenced by the consultations undertaken with a wide variety of people and organisations including the CNPA, SNH and FCS. The proposed An Camas Mòr community would be based within the Local Plan boundary which extends to approximately 105 ha. It would also require links to the surrounding existing infrastructure including roads and cycle/walk ways. There would also be a requirement for playing fields. These surrounding links and facilities would be outside of the Local Plan area and can be seen in the ILUP drawings (Volume 2), which have been used to focus the assessment.

Possible Effects and Inter-relationships

- 7.6.4** The possible effects on ecological receptors resulting from the construction and operation of the proposed development, as identified during feasibility and scoping, further consultation and ecological surveys and assessment, can be summarised as follows:

Construction Phase

- 7.6.5** Habitats, plants and faunal receptors:
- Works associated with the construction of the development infrastructure (*e.g.* soil/peat stripping, excavated mineral spoil storage, temporary lay down areas for construction materials);
 - Potential for direct and indirect disturbance to hydrologically sensitive habitats and fauna;