

## SECTION 2

### LANDSCAPE RESOURCE

#### 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This chapter outlines the findings of the assessment of the proposed new community at An Camas Mòr on the landscape resource.

2.1.2 Landscape and visual assessment are separate, although linked, processes, as stated within 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA) (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2002). The assessment of the effect on the landscape considers the landscape as a resource that can be objectively described in terms of generalised 'landscape character types / areas' which identify the key defining features of regional diversity and local distinctiveness of a particular area. The landscape assessment also considers the effect of An Camas Mòr on designated landscapes and other landscapes of recognised value.

2.1.3 The physical components which comprise the landscape resource are also components of the visual resource: these are seen in visual composition which is interpreted and appreciated by people as 'visual amenity'. Assessments of effects on the landscape and visual resource are therefore presented as two separate chapters and were carried out in parallel. The effect on peoples' visual appreciation of the landscape is reported in Volume 2, Chapter 9, Section 3, "Effect on Visual Amenity".

#### 2.2 Definitions

2.2.1 The landscape resource is defined by Horner & MacLennan as: The distinct spatial distribution, at a given moment in time, on the surface of the earth, of the physical components resulting from the interaction between natural and human processes over time, and which produce consistently occurring patterns and homogeneity of landscape character and landscape context and how these are experienced and valued.

#### 2.3 Scope and Consultations

##### Scope

2.3.1 The scope of this assessment considers the likely effect of An Camas Mòr on the landscape resource at a local level, on the wider landscape setting to the site and in relation to the landscape of the Cairngorms National Park and The Cairngorm Mountains National Scenic Area (NSA), both landscape designations of national importance. A range of information is brought together to describe the baseline conditions of the landscape resource for these different levels of assessment. The introduction of An Camas Mòr is assessed against these baseline conditions, in relation to a series of different stages of development and over different time periods.

##### Consultations

2.3.2 The following consultations were undertaken:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2008 - Cairngorms National Park Authority Landscape Officer and The Highland Council Landscape Officer to discuss general methodology, scope of assessment and associated issues. A note of the meeting is contained within the Report of Scoping Consultations. The key points discussed were:
  - 4 assessment periods related to the development of the proposed new community;
  - Assessment to be transparent and clear in its assessments and conclusions;
  - Use of TJP 'Cairngorms' landscape assessment as basis for assessing impact on National Park;
  - Consideration of issue of 'wildness' within the Park; and
  - Importance of open space design within overall layout of new community.
- 21<sup>st</sup> November 2008 – Cairngorms National Park Authority staff – to present initial assessment conclusions, initial 3D model of proposed development and outline visualisations and to 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:.
  - 11<sup>th</sup> 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; and
  - 6<sup>th</sup> January 2009 - Cairngorms National Park Authority Landscape Officer to present further revised 3D model and visualisations and to receive feedback. A note outlining CNPA's response is included in the Report of Scoping Consultations.

#### 2.4 Assessment Methodology

##### Methodology

2.4.1 The assessment methodology adopted for this assessment is described in Appendix A. The key components are:

- Establishing the baseline conditions of the existing landscape character of the study area concerned, together with its sensitivity to change in the context of the development proposed;
- Establishing the value attached to the study area in terms of any designations;

- Determining the magnitude of change to the baseline conditions resulting from the introduction of the proposed development, in relation to individual components of the landscape or the distinct spatial distribution of these components which produce recognisable patterns in the landscape;
- 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.

## Sources of Information

**2.4.2** The following principal sources of information were used for undertaking this assessment:

- Cairngorms Landscape Character Assessment. Scottish Natural Heritage Review No 75 Turnbull, Jeffrey Partnership 1996 [referred to hereafter as the SNH - LCA];
- The Highland Structure Plan, adopted 2001, The Highland Council;
- Badenoch & Strathspey Local Plan, adopted September 1997, The Highland Council;
- Cairngorms National Park Deposit Local Plan 2007, Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA);
- Cairngorms National Park Deposit Local Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment 2007, CNPA;
- Cairngorms National Park Plan 2007, CNPA;
- Cairngorms National Park 'State of the Park Report' 2006, CNPA;
- 'Scotland's Scenic Heritage', published by the Countryside Commission for Scotland dated 1978;
- 'Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes - Volume 3: Highland, Orkney and Grampian' Countryside Commission for Scotland and Historic Scotland, 1987;
- 'An Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes - Supplementary Volume 2: Highlands and Islands', SNH and Historic Scotland, 1998;
- 'Wildness Study in the Cairngorms National Park – Draft Final Report', University of Leeds for CNPA and SNH, March 2008;
- 'Policy Statement No 02/03 – Wilderness in Scotland's Countryside', SNH, 2002;
- 'Cairngorms Landscape Capacity for Housing - Final Report - Aviemore and Cambusmore', Grant, Anderson and Munro, 2005.

- Site photographs;
- An Camas Mòr Vision Statement, Gehl Architects June 2007;
- An Camas Mòr Masterplan Report, Gehl Architects / Benjamin Tindall Architects, 2009;
- Indicative Land Use Plan Strategies Document, MBEC 2009;
- Indicative Land Use Plan Period 0 1st July 2008, dated 29.08.2008;
- Indicative Land Use Plan Assessment Period A 2011, dated 21.01.2009 and 08.04.2009;
- Indicative Land Use Plan Assessment Period B 2016, dated 21.01.2009 and 08.04.2009;
- Indicative Land Use Plan Assessment Period C 2018, dated 21.01.2009 and 08.04.2009;
- Indicative Land Use Plan Assessment Period D 2027, dated 21.01.2009; and 08.04.2009;
- Indicative Land Use Plan Assessment Period D 2027, Woodland Trees and Open Space dated 21.01.2009 and 08.04.2009;
- A 3D model of the Indicative Land Use Plan, reference ACM 20090126 Periods 0-5 edges, incorporating separate models equating to the four assessment periods of the Indicative Land Use Plans, together with an additional model for the 2070 period;
- Ordnance Survey maps at 1:25,000 and 1:50,000 scale; and
- Aerial Photographs, dated 2008.

**2.4.3** A Chartered Landscape Architect made various site visits between September 2007 and November 2008, during clear weather conditions, in order to survey the existing landscape, to assess the local and wider landscape character and to assist in the confirmation of the boundaries of particular landscape character areas. A series of photographs were taken of the site and its surroundings over a two year period, and these have been used to illustrate the landscape and visual character as part of this assessment.

## 2.5 Baseline Conditions

### An Overview of the An Camas Mòr Landscape Context

**2.5.1** Located within the 10,000 hectare Rothiemurchus Estate, the proposed site of An Camas Mòr, extending to 104 ha, lies to the east of Aviemore, close to the River Spey and within a landscape setting characterised by the inter-relationship of the low-lying settled and farmed strath, with its estates and policy woodlands, the remnant Caledonian Forest which densely clothes the adjacent foothills, and the granite mountain plateaux of The Cairngorms, which comprises the most extensive area of land over 1000 m in Britain.

**2.5.2** As such, the landscape context of An Camas Mòr as proposed new community is probably unrivalled in Britain. The wooded flanks of the Cairngorm Mountains form a crucial setting to the open and bare mountain massif beyond, whilst the lower straths are significantly enhanced by the rising forests and their mountain backdrop. Equally, across the River Spey, the rising flank of the Monadhliath range forms a mountainous backdrop to Strathspey to the west.

**2.5.3** This rich natural heritage, which represents one of the fullest expressions of the ecological continuum in eastern Scotland, is contrasted by the humanised straths, where an intimate mix of farmland, estate policy plantings and mixed woodlands, the historical built heritage of the area and the numerous settlements of Badenoch & Strathspey combine to create a particularly distinctive landscape. Here the influence of man is clearly evident in contrast to the woodlands and mountain plateaux where natural processes are dominant. It is notable that very few buildings break the skyline or are seen as prominent elements within the landscape, due to the enclosing and extensive pattern of woodlands and tree belts, and that large developments such as the 25 ha Coylumbridge Hotel, funhouse and timeshare complex in the local vicinity of An Camas Mòr can be integrated with little or no impact on the woodland character of the area.

**2.5.4** This wide diversity of landscape combines to create a setting to An Camas Mòr which is scenically attractive, and the area acts as a magnet to visitors for a wide range of passive and active recreation activities. The scenic and recreational importance of the area, along with other factors, was instrumental in the recent establishment of the Cairngorms National Park, which covers an extensive area of the Cairngorms and their surroundings, including the site of An Camas Mòr. The site of An Camas Mòr is also located on the northern edge of The Cairngorm Mountains National Scenic Area (NSA), which lies entirely within the National Park.

**2.5.5** The combination of a rich and diverse landscape setting with landscape designations of national importance therefore provides a challenging context in which to introduce the proposed new community of An Camas Mòr.

## 2.6 The Study Area for Assessment

**2.6.1** It is normal practice, in undertaking a landscape assessment, to identify a study area related to the type and scale of development concerned and to the landscape context in which the development is proposed. In relation to this assessment, based on consideration of the above factors, it is considered that An Camas Mòr has the potential to have an effect on the landscape resource at two different levels:

- At the local landscape setting, in terms of effects on the landscape features and character of the site itself and its immediate surroundings; and
- At a wider landscape setting, in terms of effects on the general landscape character of the surrounding area.

**2.6.2** However, it is recognised that any changes and associated effects to these two levels of landscape character considerations, resulting from the introduction of An Camas Mòr, would be occurring within both the Cairngorms National Park and The Cairngorm Mountains NSA, both landscape designations of national importance. Consequently, it is therefore important to also consider and assess how any changes and effects occurring at the local and wider setting levels might affect the character and qualities of the wider National Park and NSA landscape. This level of assessment would consider any likely effects on the whole of the landscape of the National Park and the NSA.

**2.6.3** Consequently, differing extents of 'study area' are utilised in this assessment, in relation to the consideration of the likely effect of An Camas Mòr at these different levels: each of these levels of assessment therefore has its own specific 'study area'. Equally, the structuring of the description of the baseline landscape characteristics is related to these different levels of assessment.

## 2.7 Landscape Character

### Introduction

**2.7.1** The pattern and scale of the landscape, emanating from the interactions between the physical and natural environment with social and cultural factors over time, results in the creation of areas of differing appearance and components which can be classified into identifiable areas of distinct and relatively homogenous landscape character. The characterisation of the landscape into recognisable character areas, which share common features and characteristics, forms the starting point for much of the assessment of the effect on the landscape resource. In terms of the An Camas Mòr context, the role of geological and geomorphological processes have played a major role in shaping the character of the landscape seen today.

**2.7.2** This characterisation of the landscape can occur at different scales, related to the type and extent of landscape involved and the nature, scale and location of the proposed development concerned. Consequently, reference is often made to the concepts of regional diversity and local distinctiveness. For this assessment, consideration of the landscape character associated with the proposed new community at An Camas Mòr is undertaken at two levels:

- The landscape character of the local setting, considering the An Camas Mòr site and its immediate surroundings, based on work included within the Cairngorms Landscape Capacity for Housing study and landscape analysis and characterisation work undertaken for this assessment; and
- The landscape character of the wider setting of the surrounding forest landscape and mountain context of An Camas Mòr, using the SNH-LCA work as its basis.

**2.7.3** However, it is noted that the wider landscape setting of An Camas Mòr forms part of the Cairngorms National Park (Figure 2.2 – Cairngorms National Park Boundary), and consequently a discussion of the special qualities of the National Park, drawing on work undertaken by CNPA, is used to introduce the description of the baseline landscape character of the wider setting of An Camas Mòr. Equally, issues related to 'wildness' within the National Park, based on a draft CNPA study, are extrapolated in relation to the SNH-LCA character areas and commentary on this issue is incorporated into the general baseline description of each landscape character area.

**2.7.4** Consideration of the likely impact on the landscape of The Cairngorm Mountains NSA is undertaken within a separate section of the assessment considering landscape designations.

**2.7.5** In undertaking this assessment, reference has been made to the *Cairngorms Landscape Capacity for Housing* study commissioned by CNPA and which specifically considered the Aviemore and the An Camas Mòr area. This study provided a useful analysis of the local landscape character of the area and its sensitivity to housing development. It is noted that the study did not allow for the vision for a community park for the area between An Camas Mòr and

Aviemore as outlined in the Local Plan. Consequently, the capacity study identified areas of elevated fields between the An Camas Mòr site and the River Spey as a suggested location for a first phase of new housing development, with an area along the western edge of the An Camas Mòr site identified for longer term development. It is noted that this location for development does not correspond with the proposed settlement boundary identified in the Badenoch & Strathspey Local Plan 1997, nor with the boundary for An Camas Mòr included in The Cairngorms National Park Deposit Local Plan of 2007, which post dates the *Cairngorms Landscape Capacity for Housing Study* of 2005.

## Landscape Character of the Local Setting

### General

- 2.7.6** In landscape character terms, it is not possible to separate the An Camas Mòr site from its immediate surroundings, as various physical and visual features combine across the site boundary to create the major landscape components of the site and its surroundings. Consequently, there is a clear pattern of openness and enclosure across and around the site created by the inter-relationship between woodland, heathland and agricultural land with the underlying topography.
- 2.7.7** The immediate setting of An Camas Mòr typifies much of the landscape character of the surrounding straths, comprising a diverse mix of farmland, woodland, forests, plantations and settlements, where man's influence is considerably strong. Low rising hills and forests east of Guislich Farm contain the immediate setting to the east, whilst to the south, the woodlands along the River Druie and around the Dell form a local setting. To the west, the agricultural lands, woodlands and tree belts along the River Spey and the backdrop of the Aviemore roofscape and its surrounding forests form the western context of the site, with the forests and plantations to the north of An Camas Mòr forming containment to the setting to the north.
- 2.7.8** The local landscape is strongly rural in character, comprising of forest, woodland and mixed agricultural land uses, and containing very little visible built development, other than the farm complex at The Dell and elements associated with the Inverdruie Fishery. The B970 road between Coylumbridge and Nethy Bridge is a typical rural minor road of informal geometry and varying width, has no associated footpath provision and has no street lighting. The B970 from Coylumbridge to Aviemore is more uniform in its character and geometry, and including footpath provision, and with street lighting extending between Aviemore and the east side of Inverdruie.
- 2.7.9** The local area of the An Camas Mòr site is located within an area generally classified as low – medium 'wildness' within the CNPA study referred to in later sections of this assessment. Given the broad scale nature of the CNPA study, a detailed consideration of 'wildness' has not been undertaken in relation to the local landscape character areas (LLCA) identified below.
- 2.7.10** Four LLCAs have been identified within the local landscape setting of An Camas Mòr:
- Elevated Woodland;
  - Heathland / Pasture;
  - Cultivated Fields; and
  - Flood Plain Agricultural Land.

### Elevated Woodlands LLCA

- 2.7.11** This area extends over a relatively level raised plateau over much of the An Camas Mòr site and continues southwards towards Coylumbridge and northwards towards Loch Pityoulish, being bounded to the east by the B970. The woodlands comprise older native pine and birch woods, with some older pine being established as a commercial woodland along the western edge of the plateau, whilst younger pine and some broadleaves lie between these and the B970. Some areas of woodland form strongly defined linear edges, particularly to the north. Areas of heathland recently planted or regenerating with trees occupy open areas within the woodland extent, particularly to the immediate west of the B970 and these extend eastwards across the B970 to combine with the Guislich farmlands to create a contiguous area of more open land. The woodland visually screens Aviemore in views looking westwards, as well as contributing to the wooded setting of Aviemore when viewed from the wider distant landscape. Whilst appearing relatively flat and featureless, this area contains a series of 'kettle holes', small-scale depressions of glacial origin, (see Volume 2, Chapter 9, Section 1, Geology and Soils) which produce a distinctive sequence of circular hollows across the site. Despite the close proximity of the River Spey, the combination of woodland and steep river banks results in the river not being a prominent feature of this area. The area contains no built development, although some estate tracks and informal footpaths extend through the area.
- 2.7.12** Whilst the LLCA is located within the Cairngorms National Park and The Cairngorm Mountains NSA, its extensive woodland cover could allow a development of the nature proposed to be integrated with minimal landscape change subject to careful design, and therefore it is considered that the sensitivity of the landscape resource of the 'Elevated Woodlands' LLCA to changes associated with An Camas Mòr would be **medium**.

### Heathland/Pasture LLCA

- 2.7.13** This area lies to the east of the B970, contained by the elevated woodlands to the west and by the rising foothills and forests to the east of Guislich Farm. It is a predominantly open area of landscape, contrasting with the adjacent woodlands, and this openness extends into areas of heathland within the adjacent elevated woodlands area. Areas of pasture are interspersed with patches of rougher ground. There is a gentle rise in the landform eastwards before the land rises more steeply into the adjacent forests and foothills. The containment of this area by adjacent woodland and rising topography limits its visibility from the surrounding area, although it is visible from elevated locations to the east.
- 2.7.14** The open character of this LLCA makes it sensitive to the introduction of large-scale built development, and therefore it is considered that the sensitivity of the landscape resource of the 'Heathland / Pasture' LLCA to changes associated with An Camas Mòr would be **high**.

### Cultivated Fields LLCA

- 2.7.15** This area of open agricultural land, containing arable crops, lies immediately west of the River Spey lying above the level of the flood plain on a distinct river terrace. The ground is gently undulating, and is strongly contained and sheltered by the woodlands to the east, which restrict views in this direction, and by the distinctive river terraces, with their dense stands of mature larch trees, to the west along the river and to the south. The elevated river terrace provides views of the river, although in many places the larch provide a dense screen and prevent direct views of the river. The fields are visible from elevated locations to the west of Aviemore, where

they appear as a clear pattern in relation to the adjacent woodland and tree belts, although the mature larch along the river provide well defined visual containment to views from the west at lower levels. Field boundaries are predominantly post and wire fences. A large overhead electricity tower line passes along the eastern edge of the fields and continues both northwards and southwards into the wider landscape. The area contains no built development.

**2.7.16** The open, undeveloped character of this LLCA makes it sensitive to the introduction of large-scale built development, and therefore it is considered that the sensitivity of the landscape resource of the 'Cultivated Fields' LLCA to changes associated with An Camas Mòr would be **high**.

### **Flood Plain Agricultural Land LLCA**

**2.7.17** This area of low-lying open grazing land and wetland is subject to periodic flooding by the Rivers Spey and Druie over much of its area. These fields extend eastwards towards Dell Farm and its associated buildings, and are enclosed by the adjacent rising river terraces to the north with their associated tree belts and woodland, which separates them from the elevated fields of the 'Cultivated Fields' LLCA and gives them a slightly secluded and hidden character. This sense of seclusion is reinforced by the tree belts which flank the edge of the adjacent rivers. The complex series of fishing lochs and ponds of Rothiemurchus Fishery is located in the south-west corner of this area, although the overall pattern of the LLCA is of considerable simplicity. The smooth texture of the ground vegetation contrasts strongly with the surrounding woodland, and the wetlands and associated fishing lochs add a further distinctive character to this area. The area is not particularly visible from the surrounding area, due to its low-lying position and woodland containment to all sides. Despite its close proximity to the Rivers Spey and Druie, dense tree belts along the river banks prevent views to the rivers. The large overhead pylon line passes through this area and continues southwards into the wider landscape.

**2.7.18** The open, undeveloped character of this LLCA, and its simplicity of landscape pattern makes it sensitive to the introduction of large-scale built development, and therefore it is considered that the sensitivity of the landscape resource of the 'Flood Plain Agricultural Land' LLCA to changes associated with An Camas Mòr would be **high**.

### **Landscape Character of the Wider Setting**

#### **Introduction**

**2.7.19** The wider landscape setting of An Camas Mòr is formed by the combination of the landscape of the River Spey with the extensive forest landscape and rolling foothills of Rothiemurchus which surround An Camas Mòr to the east, and the dramatic elevated mountainous backdrop of the Cairngorm Mountains to the east and south, and the Monadhliath Mountains to the west and north-west. These elements combine to form a continuous surrounding skyline of mountains and forests which embrace An Camas Mòr.

**2.7.20** The wider landscape setting to An Camas Mòr forms an important part of the landscape character of the Cairngorms National Park. Prior to outlining the different landscape character areas which contribute to this wider setting, it is appropriate to consider the landscape qualities of this designated landscape as part of the baseline conditions. Consideration will also be given to the concept of 'wildness' within the Park, an issue which the Park is currently in the process of

considering in detail to inform forthcoming policy on this issue. This consideration will establish a context in which the more detailed landscape character areas of the SNH-LCA are described.

### **The 'Special Qualities' of the National Park**

**2.7.21** "The landscape of the Cairngorms National Park is a unique and diverse mix of mountains, straths, glens, forests and farmland forming a distinct character of national importance shaped by the interaction of natural processes and people." (Cairngorm National Park Plan 2007, CNPA).

**2.7.22** The CNPA has produced a range of information regarding the landscape of the Park, and this is drawn upon in relation to this section of the assessment. Currently, CNPA are in the process of preparing a detailed landscape character assessment for the Park, which draws on and amplifies the current Cairngorms SNH-LCA. However, CNPA has advised that this detailed assessment will not be available for reference in connection with this assessment, and that therefore the Cairngorms SNH-LCA should be used as the general baseline information, in association with a broad scale consideration of the 'special qualities' of the Park which CNPA has previously identified.

**2.7.23** CPNA has identified a range of "special qualities" which are considered to be commonly recognised and referred to in relation to the Park. These natural and cultural qualities combine to give the National Park its distinctive identity. The emphasis of these qualities is not just on their individual qualities but how they inter-relate and combine to make the character of the Park special and distinctive.

**2.7.24** These "special qualities" include:

- Distinctive Landscapes – the combination of geology, glacial processes and subsequent climate has shaped the landscape into a unique mix of mountains, hills, glens and straths, onto which people have applied complex management, resulting in a diverse and outstanding landscape;
- Rich Biodiversity – the interplay of the Park's natural resources with the typically low-intensity land management of the area has led to a rich mosaic of habitat types which, in turn, supports tremendous biodiversity;
- Mountains – the mountains make perhaps the strongest impression, rising in steps from the surrounding glens to the great expansive plateau that dominates the heart of the Park;
- Moorland – moorlands cover more than half of the area of the Park, formed by a combination of man and nature, and managed to maintain a landscape for sporting and farming pursuits;
- Forests and Woodlands – the great pine forests of Deeside and Strathspey form the largest area of ancient and semi-natural woodland in Britain, spreading from the straths to the last remaining natural tree line in Britain;
- Straths and Farmland – the fertile agricultural land around the rivers provides a contrast to the dominance of mountains and forests, and are valuable for the important habitats and species which the low intensity agriculture creates and supports;

- Rivers and Lochs – the streams and waterfalls of the plateau merge, passing through glacial ponds, lochans and lochs to form the great rivers of the Park. In the straths, the rivers form floodplains with a rich biodiversity, providing recreation and employment;
- Recreation and Enjoyment – the mountains, glens, forests and straths provide for a wide range of active and passive enjoyment, and opportunities for most to experience wildness are relatively accessible;
- The Built Environment – the legacy of human settlement is scattered across the landscape, dating back thousands of years from prehistoric cairns, shielings and townships to the planned villages of the eighteenth and nineteenth century and the Victorian sporting lodges. The traditional building materials give strong coherency to the architecture; and
- Culture and Traditions – the archaeological record and Gaelic place names illuminate the history of the relationship between people and place, and the cultural heritage of the area is layered with material evidence and local traditions over time.

**2.7.25** The landscape character of the Park is typified by its rich diversity and variety. It is the combination, interaction and juxtaposition of a range of landscape types and components which distinguish the area and make it special. The combination of geology, glacial processes and climate have forged a unique mix of mountains, hills, glens and straths, each supporting a diversity of vegetation types. Onto this, man has applied a complex sequence of land management processes and built development over generations. Together, the interaction of natural processes and people have contributed to the diversity of landscape character seen throughout the Park today.

**2.7.26** The central mountains are probably the most striking and dominant landscape feature of the Park, rising in a distinct series of steps from the surrounding straths and glens to the expansive gravelly plateau at the heart of the Park. Shaped by glacial action, and dissected by deep, steep sided glens and corries, the scale of the plateau is considerable, and contributes to the experience of wild land sought by many visitors.

**2.7.27** The great pine forests of Strathspey and Mar form part of the largest area of ancient and semi-natural woodland in Britain. In the west, the pinewoods extend from the edges of the lower straths over the foothills and basin of Rothiemurchus to the upper slopes of the mountainsides, where they often form the natural tree line. Intermixed with the ancient pinewoods are aspen woodlands which date from the early colonisation of the area following the last ice age. Management of the forests and woodlands has been an integral part of the evolution of their character over centuries, contributing to the economic and cultural character of the area.

**2.7.28** The low-lying ground associated with the River Spey and its tributaries provides fertile ground which has been exploited for agricultural production. Dominated by a mix of grassland and small woodlands, this open farmland contrasts with the surrounding dense woodlands, forests and mountains, and reinforces the distinctive character of the river corridors. The flood plains of the Spey form important habitats with a rich biodiversity.

**2.7.29** The legacy of built development extends through much of the lower areas of the Park. The combination of farmhouses and steadings, several planned settlements, sporting lodges and large houses with associated policy parklands, coupled with a strong architectural coherence to many of the older buildings and villages, enriches the landscape character of the area. Whilst

most of the main settlements are located to the west of the River Spey, associated with the historical railway and road route along Strathspey, there are several smaller scale settlements on the east side of the Spey, predominantly located within a woodland setting.

**2.7.30** This diversity of landscape offers unrivalled opportunities for experience of all aspects of the environment through a wide range of active and passive pursuits, ranging from mountaineering, off road cycling, canoeing and sailing to more gentle activities such as sightseeing.

**2.7.31** It is the combination of all these landscape elements, along with other factors, within a relatively small geographic area which have contributed to the designation of the Cairngorms National Park. The amalgamation of biodiversity, geodiversity, landscape character and the historical built legacy creates an outstanding natural and cultural environment resulting from the combination of natural processes and management by man over time.

**2.7.32** Considering the diversity of landscape character and the ‘special qualities’ of the Park and how they combine and inter-relate, the concept of developing a new community within the National Park could be considered a radical proposal. Given the importance of the National Park as a landscape designation at a national level, and despite the fact that the National Park is designated not just for its landscape characteristics, in the context of this assessment, it is considered that the National Park would have **high** sensitivity to the introduction of An Camas Mòr.

### ***‘Wildness’ within the Cairngorm National Park***

**2.7.33** The Cairngorms National Park Plan identifies ‘wildness’ as a key special quality of the National Park, and in particular, the Park Plan includes a strategic objective to ‘conserve and enhance the sense of wildness in the montane area and other parts of the Park.’ The National Park Deposit Local Plan also contains statements related to ‘wildness’ – “In many parts of the Park, people can experience a sense of wildness that is related to landscape character, the habitats, views and location. Although people’s perceptions of wildness may vary, there are clearly parts of the National Park where a combination of landscape character, a sense of remoteness or a perceived absence of recent development all combine to create a sense of wildness. The quality of the dark night skies is highlighted in the National Park Plan as significantly contributing to the sense of wildness that can be experienced”, and “The Park Plan recognises that some activities and forms of development can affect the sense and experience of wildness by introducing new sights, sounds or patterns in the landscape”.

**2.7.34** ‘Wildness’ is a largely a perceptual concept, as it is a quality perceived by humans that can change for an individual over time and which varies significantly from person to person. SNHs Policy Document ‘Policy Statement No 02/03 – Wilderness in Scotland’s Countryside’, SNH, 2002, considers this topic in further detail. ‘Wild Land’ is a location where ‘wildness’ can best and most consistently be experienced. NPPG 14 ‘Natural Heritage’ defines wild land as “uninhabited and often relatively inaccessible countryside where the influence of human activity on the character and quality of the environment has been minimal”.

**2.7.35** Consultants acting for CNPA have currently prepared a draft GIS based analysis of wildness to identify the geographic extent and intensity to which different wildness qualities or attributes can be experienced across the Park. This study is intended to be more precise than the current SNH ‘Search Areas for Wild Land’, identifying where ‘wildness’ is most strongly expressed. It is intended that the finalised study will help to shape CNPA policy on this issue, but this is unlikely to be completed within the timeframe of this assessment. It is recognised that factors which

might affect 'wildness' can extend or occur outwith the boundary of the Park, although it is considered that their influence significantly decreases with distance, and that equally, it is their distance from the location of 'wild land' which is the important factor in this context rather than from the boundary of the Park itself.

**2.7.36** The study uses and maps four principle attributes that are considered to contribute to perceptions of 'wildness' within the CNP:

- Naturalness of land cover;
- Absence of modern human artefacts;
- Rugged and challenging nature of terrain; and
- Remoteness.

**2.7.37** These attribute maps are combined into a series of 'wildness' maps, based on different applications, weightings and perceptions of the various principle attributes, which quantify and spatially delimit perceptions of 'wildness' across the Park. The general conclusions of the study in relation to An Camas Mòr are:

- The same basic overall pattern of wild land can be observed across all the attribute maps;
- The wilder areas of the CNP are in the main confined to the large roadless areas of the mountain core and their associated glens;
- The least wild areas are strongly controlled by the straths and glens, including Strathspey; and
- Plantation forestry has a marked effect in reducing wildness in key localities such as Glenmore/Rothiemurchus.

**2.7.38** The general findings of the 'wildness' study have been incorporated into the SNH-LCA character area descriptions, to include and amplify this landscape characteristic into the baseline landscape characteristic of each character area. This has been undertaken by a simple correlation of the 'wildness' maps with the SNH-LCA character area map, to establish a general relationship between these two bodies of information.

## SNH Landscape Character Assessment

### General

**2.7.39** SNH has mapped the whole of Scotland according to landscape character types and areas in a series of Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) reports. These reports form the primary source of reference for defining the existing baseline landscape character information of the Study Area.

**2.7.40** The proposed new community at An Camas Mòr is located within the Landscape Character Area identified as 'Speyside' within the Cairngorms SNH-LCA. Landscape Character Areas which are adjacent to that of the proposed new community, or which contribute to the wider setting of the

site of An Camas Mòr, are identified as 'The Monadhliaths', 'Badenoch', 'Rothiemurchus/Abernethy', 'The North-Eastern Hills' and 'The Central Massif'.

**2.7.41** Although the Landscape Character Areas included within the SNH-LCA were identified in relation to all development types and at a larger, regional scale, desk and field based analysis has indicated that the boundaries and character descriptions for the SNH types generally reflect well the distinction of landscape character which forms the wider setting for An Camas Mòr. Therefore, these LCTs have been adopted by this LVIA to reflect the pattern, extent and nature of the existing landscape character throughout the wider setting of the site, although it is acknowledged that CNPA are undertaking a more detailed landscape character assessment of the Park.

### 'Speyside'

**2.7.42** The key characteristics of the 'Speyside' Landscape Character Area are:

- Throughout its length, the landscape exhibits a diverse and well-balanced mix of open ground, extensive woodland, pasture, heather moorland and settlement;
- Generally broad and open strath, interrupted only by a gently curving spur of predominantly wooded, low hills;
- Strath is contained by gently rolling open foothills;
- Broad and undulating strath floor which is predominantly agricultural, with large regular shaped arable and pastoral fields bounded by post and wire fencing;
- Rich agricultural landscape of the river contrasts with the adjacent dark plantations and forests of the surrounding foothills;
- The strath is relatively well populated, with some buildings within Aviemore appearing as prominent features in views from the wider landscape, although the generally well-wooded character of the strath results in the area appearing predominantly rural in character; and
- This landscape character area generally has a low - medium classification of 'wildness', resulting from the combination of a series of settlements and other human features, major communication routes which limit the sense of remoteness and an absence of rugged terrain. This classification changes to medium on the open foothills which flank the strath, although the predominant classification within the character area is low.

**2.7.43** The existence of various settlements within this LCA, and its predominantly wooded character, could allow a development of the nature proposed to be integrated with minimal landscape change subject to careful design, and therefore it is considered that the sensitivity of the landscape resource of the 'Speyside' LCA to changes associated with An Camas Mòr would be **medium**.

### 'The Monadhliaths'

**2.7.44** The key characteristics of the SNH - LCA 'The Monadhliaths' Landscape Character Area are:

- A massive bulk of peaks of over 800 metres to the south, tapering down to the north;
- A series of broad, smooth, rounded heather clad summits and slopes of generally uniform height, colour and texture;
- Small areas of scree patterning on the upper slopes;
- The lower slopes are mainly made up of small scale hummocks and hollows, and valleys have been created by numerous watercourses;
- Some isolated and remote glens with improved pastures and woodlands; and
- This landscape character area generally has a medium classification of 'wildness', resulting from an absence of human artefacts, reasonably challenging terrain and a general naturalness of land cover.

**2.7.45** The elevated and remote nature of much of this LCA makes it sensitive to the introduction of large-scale built development, and therefore it is considered that the sensitivity of the landscape resource of 'The Monadhliaths' LCA to changes associated with An Camas Mòr would be **high**.

### **'Badenoch'**

**2.7.46** The key characteristics of the SNH - LCA 'Badenoch' Landscape Character Area are:

- A broad, open strath flanked by gently undulating hills, leading to the Monadhliaths to the west and the steep slopes rising to the high plateaux of the Cairngorm massif in the north east;
- Flat open strath floor is a dominant feature, being particularly broad in the south and becoming narrower and more enclosed to the north, where knolls and small, rounded hills increasingly penetrate the strath floor;
- The River Spey meanders through the strath floor which contains extensive marsh and wetlands of northern fen;
- Scattered small water bodies predominate further northwards, culminating in a large water body and wet meadows;
- On the lower slopes extending onto the flat strath floor, improved pastures are enclosed by small scale coniferous plantations;
- Mixed and broadleaved woodlands and stands of native pinewoods extend onto the lower hilltops;
- A pattern of improved and rough pastures lead to more open, heather moorland, covering the foothills of the Drumochter Hills; and
- This landscape character area generally has a low - medium classification of 'wildness', resulting from the combination of a series of settlements and other human features, major communication routes which limit the sense of remoteness and an

absence of rugged terrain, although the predominant classification within the character area is low.

**2.7.47** The broad and open nature of much of this LCA, and its extensive marsh and wetlands of a distinctive character, predominantly wooded character, makes it sensitive to the introduction of large-scale built development, and therefore it is considered that the sensitivity of the landscape resource of the 'Badenoch' LCA to changes associated with An Camas Mòr would be **high**.

### **'Rothiemurchus / Abernethy'**

**2.7.48** The key characteristics of the SNH - LCA 'Rothiemurchus/Abernethy' Landscape Character Area are:

- Gently undulating raised valleys with a distinctive bowl shape;
- Numerous small, rounded lochs;
- Extensive tracts of forest and plantations, with the less managed parts of the forest often having fragmented boundaries between heather moor, rougher pastures and trees; and
- This landscape character area generally has a low - medium classification of 'wildness', resulting from the combination of a series of human features, particularly along the Glenmore corridor, access routes which limit the sense of remoteness, an absence of rugged terrain and extensive areas of plantation forest. This classification changes to medium towards the margins of the character area on the rising slopes and in the more easterly area of Abernethy.

**2.7.49** The extensively wooded and forested character of this LCA could allow a development of the nature proposed to be integrated with minimal landscape change subject to careful design, and therefore it is considered that the sensitivity of the landscape resource of the 'Rothiemurchus / Abernethy' LCA to changes associated with An Camas Mòr would be **medium**.

### **'The North-Eastern Hill Ranges'**

**2.7.50** The key characteristics of the SNH - LCA 'The North-Eastern Hills' Landscape Character Area are:

- Hills which are characterised by their relatively low and rounded summits, gentle slopes and long, smooth interlocking spurs;
- Small burns which lightly incise the hillsides and drain into rivers which flow within undulating valley floors: these are often more deeply cut into valleys in the hills where there are occasional mounds formed from sandy, glacial deposits which have been colonised by rough grass;
- The upper slopes of the hills are predominately covered by heather moorland which emphasises the smoothness of the topography;
- Large areas of peat hags occur on the upper, shallow slopes;

- Although these hills generally have an open character, in places stands of native pine and birch pepper the hill slopes and small broadleaved woodlands colonise a few of the more sheltered valleys;
- Settlement is sparse, being confined to the valley floors and lower slopes; and
- This landscape character area generally has a medium to high classification of 'wildness', resulting from the combination of an absence of human artefacts, rugged and challenging terrain and a naturalness of land cover.

**2.7.51** The elevated and remote nature of much of this LCA and the sparsity of existing built development makes it sensitive to the introduction of large-scale built development, and therefore it is considered that the sensitivity of the landscape resource of 'The North-Eastern Hills' LCA to changes associated with An Camas Mòr would be **high**.

### **'The Central Massif'**

**2.7.52** The key characteristics of the SNH - LCA 'The Central Massif' Landscape Character Area are:

- Huge granite plateaux deeply incised by steep-sided glens and corries;
- Extensive undulating plateaux with a bare, yet coarse textured surface, comprising huge boulder fields, shattered stones, gravel and sand slopes on a vast scale;
- The plateaux are cut by trough-like glens and boulder-strewn corries, which frequently contain dark lochs, and often lie at the foot of sheer rock faces;
- The northern and eastern mountains of the area are distinguished by a series of summit tors, forming upstanding blocks of weathered granite up to 30 m in height; and
- This landscape character area generally has high classification of 'wildness', resulting from the combination of a naturalness of land cover, an absence of human artefacts, particularly rugged and challenging terrain and general remoteness. Within the wider setting of An Camas Mòr, this character area is where 'wildness' can be most readily perceived. This classification changes to medium towards the fringes of the character area, although the dominant classification within the character area is high.

**2.7.53** The elevated and remote nature of much of this LCA, its open character and the absence of existing built development makes it sensitive to the introduction of large-scale built development, and therefore it is considered that the sensitivity of the landscape resource of 'The Central Massif' LCA to changes associated with An Camas Mòr would be **high**.

## **Change in the Landscape Generally**

### **Change in the Past**

**2.7.54** The landscape we see today has resulted from the complex interaction of natural physical processes with the activities of man, some of which continue today. Geological and geomorphological processes have played a dominant role in shaping the existing landscape, and

the subsequent influence of man through the establishment of settlements and other built development, farming, forest clearance and planting and general land management has further altered the appearance of the landscape. On-going geomorphological activity, changes in land use and management and the introduction of new built development illustrate the dynamic and continually evolving character of the landscape. Within the recent past, there has been some relatively unsympathetic urban expansion of Aviemore, which has had a visual impact on elevated views from surrounding areas and on approaches to the village, being poorly located and designed in relation to the landscape character of the area.

### **Change in the Future**

**2.7.55** The SNH – LCA identifies new built development as a key force for change within the landscape character of the area, and notes that housing pressure is likely to focus on Aviemore and its environs. It notes that the open flood plain of the River Spey is particularly sensitive to development, offering little opportunity for visual integration, and that the traditional settlement pattern along Strathspey generally avoids the flood plain in favour of the slightly elevated ground bordering it. Given that these elevated areas are typically well wooded, such built development tends to be partially enclosed or has a backdrop of woodland which offers both visual screening and enclosure. Consequently, the SNH – LCA recommends new built development conforms to local settlement patterns and that the creation of a new framework of woodland to contain and screen new building should be an integral part of development proposals.

**2.7.56** The strategic siting of the An Camas Mòr proposal, identified in the Badenoch & Strathspey Local Plan 1997 and in the Highland Structure Plan 2001, complies with the guidance included within the SNH – LCA, avoiding the flood plain area of the River Spey for the elevated, wooded ground beyond.

**2.7.57** The Cairngorms National Park Deposit Local Plan of 2007 continues the proposal for the new community at An Camas Mòr and identifies an indicative settlement boundary for the site, within which it is expected that development of a community of up to 1500 homes could be developed over time. A range of issues which the new community would be required to address is included.

## **2.8 Landscape Designations**

### **Introduction**

**2.8.1** Figure 2.5 indicates the location of landscape designations in relation to the site of An Camas Mòr. It should be noted that the consideration of the effect of An Camas Mòr on Gardens and Designed Landscapes is included within the chapter 'Effect on Cultural Heritage'.

### **The Cairngorms National Park**

**2.8.2** The landscape characteristics of the National Park have been covered in the previous section. A separate appraisal of An Camas Mòr in relation to the aims of the National Park is included in Part 2 of this Environmental Statement.

## The Cairngorm Mountains National Scenic Area

**2.8.3** NSAs are a statutory national designation covering some of Scotland’s most outstanding landscapes. Government policy seeks to protect, wherever possible, the environmental assets represented by such designations. ‘Scotland’s Scenic Heritage’ (Countryside Commission for Scotland, 1978) describes the key characteristics of the landscape and visual resource within each NSA.

**2.8.4** Figure 2.5 indicates that An Camas Mòr is located close to the north-western edge of the Cairngorm Mountains NSA, which extends to over 67,000 hectares. It is noted that Aviemore is located just within the north-western boundary of the NSA. Reference to ‘Scotland’s Scenic Heritage’ identifies the following key characteristics of the NSA:

**Table 2.1: Key Characteristics of The Cairngorm Mountains NSA**

“The granite plateau of the Cairngorm Mountains forms the most extensive area of land above 1,000m anywhere in Britain”, although “its height is less immediately apparent than its bulk.”
“The high plateau is bleak and bare and it is the immensity of scale, once realised, which impresses.”
Murray, 1962, is quoted “with the vast corries, the massive slopes, the long passes, the wide skies, and the very bareness of the ground, where the elements work with a power not known at lower altitudes, gives to these plateaux their distinctive quality”.
“The edge of the plateau, where not etched by corries, is well defined by long smooth steep slopes which from Speyside or Deeside rise in tiers.”
“Lower down, deer forest, sheep grazing and forestry assume a greater importance in the appearance of the landscape. It is the forests around the plateau foot which for many people characterise the Cairngorm Mountains; three extensive and differing remnants of the native Caledonian Pine Forest occur at Rothiemuchus and Abernethy, Glen Feshie and Mar.”
“In Rothiemurchus, the pines on the upper forest slopes give way to a mixture of birch and pine, and then to the rich policy woodlands of Strathspey. The forests are deeply carpeted with heather, blueberry and other flora, and the woods are interspersed with lochans of varying character, and views culminating in the peaty waters of the Spey itself.”
“Glen Feshie is wilder and sterner, the pines mature and solitary, interspersed with juniper. The river dominates the forest, a great braided mountain stream with shingle beds cast over an uneven flood plain, almost continental in scale.”
“Mar Forest is different again. Higher, and therefore less rich than Rothiemurchus in its flora, it graduates from birch, pine and fir to massive pines alone.....Like Glen Feshie, the rivers are important here but not for their scale or grandeur. They are noisy burns dashing over granite boulders washed brightly pink by their clear waters, a lively element in the landscape.”
“These woodland flanks of the Cairngorm plateau form a setting of rare beauty for the mountain massif, and are in turn enhanced by the mountain backdrop”.

**2.8.5** Given the characteristics described above and the importance of the NSA designation at a national level, it is judged that the NSA has **high** sensitivity to the introduction of An Camas Mòr. It is noted that there are no settlements located within the boundary of the NSA of the scale of the proposed An Camas Mòr new community.

## 2.9 Description of the Landscape Characteristics of the Proposed New Community

**2.9.1** The proposed new community of An Camas Mòr has a series of key landscape characteristics which can be described as follows:

- The An Camas Mòr site comprises an area of existing woodlands, forest plantations, tree belts and individual trees, all of which contribute to and create a woodland setting to the development and as shown on Indicative Land Use Plan Period 0;
- The site of An Camas Mòr is located on an elevated area of land set above the flood plain level of the River Spey, and separated from the flood plain by distinct areas of escarpment;
- The layout of An Camas Mòr would incorporate a series of woodland buffer zones around and within the periphery of the site, comprising predominantly of existing areas of woodland supplemented with new planting where required, as indicated on the Indicative Land Use Plan drawings;
- An Camas Mòr is a planned development with a recognisable development pattern, occupying a compact footprint;
- The new community would comprise a high density core along and around the east-west High Street, reducing in density towards the perimeter of the site. In the higher density areas, buildings may be up to 3.5 stories high, and in the medium and lower density areas, up to 2.5 stories high; these limits being chosen with the intention that in the medium term, trees would grow to provide shelter and maintain the wooded nature of the landscape;
- Within An Camas Mòr, there would be a gradation of woodland/tree cover from the periphery into the core of the development, with the lower density housing towards the edges comprising of woodland with clearings for houses and the woodland becoming more open in character towards the centre as the built development pattern becomes denser;
- An Camas Mòr would incorporate an interlinked network of tree planting and open spaces throughout the development related to the street, building and garden pattern, comprising retention of existing mature and newly planted trees;
- A series of kettle holes, small-scale depressions of glacial origin, produce a distinctive sequence of circular hollows across the site and would be retained as areas of open space;
- Associated with these characteristics, the Rothiemurchus Estate Forest Plan, which covers the site of An Camas Mòr and its surrounding area, and will ensure that the generally wooded character of the An Camas Mòr site and its wider setting will be retained beyond the lifetime of the development of the new community, is also relevant (Volume 1 Chapter 5 Section 5.7 Woodland Management); and

- In relation to the ecological assessment included within this Environmental Statement, areas of compensation habitat are proposed to offset loss of existing habitat types and this assessment considers the landscape implications of these measures.

**2.9.2** A full description of the proposed development is included within Volume 1, Chapter 5 of the ES and included on the Indicative Land Use Plan drawings.

## 2.10 Significance of Effect at EIA Assessment Periods

### General

**2.10.1** As described earlier within this Environmental Statement, the assessment of the effect of the proposed new community is considered at four separate stages of the development process related to time periods and extent of development specified in the Local Plan. The key assessment stages in the 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.

**2.10.2** Utilising historical information from Rothiemurchus Estate regarding growth rates of particular tree species on the site of An Camas Mòr, a Tree Heights statement has been prepared, indicating the heights to which existing small and newly planted trees can be assumed to have grown in relation to the different assessment periods. This information is included within the Indicative Land Use Plan Strategies Document.

**2.10.3** The assumed heights for existing small and newly planted trees, as shown on the ILUP drawings and used in the 3D model, and based on a planting date of 2009 / 2010 are:

- Assessment Period A, 2011 – 0.3 m height;
- Assessment Period B, 2016 – 2.0 m height;
- Assessment Period C, 2018 – 3.4 m height;
- Assessment Period D, 2027 – 10.0 m height; and
- 2070 – 20.0 m height.

**2.10.4** These heights have been used in this assessment in determining the contribution that tree growth would play in influencing the level of landscape impact resulting from the development of the proposed new community over the different assessment periods.

## Identification of Change and Nature and Significance of Effect to the Landscape Resource

### General

**2.11.1** This section identifies the potential changes to the landscape resource which would likely result from the introduction of An Camas Mòr at the different assessment periods, and outlines the nature and significance of the likely effects on the landscape resource resulting from these changes.

**2.11.2** An Camas Mòr is likely to result in direct, physical and permanent changes within the LLCAs of the local setting identified and the 'Speyside' LCA of the wider setting within which it is located. In order for any change to occur within a landscape character area, the distinct spatial distribution and combination of landscape components which produce its consistently occurring patterns and which result in its homogeneity need to be altered.

**2.11.3** Equally, it is recognised that any such changes to the LLCAs of the local setting and the LCAs of the wider setting of An Camas Mòr would be occurring within both the Cairngorms National Park and The Cairngorm Mountains NSA, and therefore these changes are also considered in the context of their potential impact on the landscape resource of these designated landscapes.

**2.11.4** It should be noted that the assessment of effect on The Cairngorm Mountains NSA is undertaken as a separate assessment within the designated landscapes section of this chapter.

### Assessment Period A

#### Local Landscape Setting

#### 'Elevated Woodlands' LLCA

#### Changes to the Landscape Resource

**2.11.5** The Coylumbridge relocated road would result in some tree/woodland loss and removal of a section of the woodland boundary wall along the proposed road corridor where it connects from the existing allocated road corridor behind the Colyum Road development to the existing B970. Over approximately half of the relocated road route until its junction with the B970, it would follow an existing route corridor allocated for its provision. Given the detailed landform pattern of the wooded area to the north of Drumchork, earthworks associated with the new road alignment would result in additional tree removal being required.

**2.11.6** The upgrading of the B970 would result in a change to the existing character of this section of the road, through the combination of the introduction of a new and continuous edge detail to the road on its western side, a unifying of the road width and the loss of individual trees along the edge of the length of road concerned. This tree loss would be more extensive towards the northern section of the road upgrade, where the tree pattern is denser and the trees are of a more mature stature. The associated pedestrian / cycleway route located to the west of the B970 would be routed to avoid any tree loss or impact on tree canopy by its detailed alignment.

Equally, any associated earthworks would be minimised in order to limit loss of existing ground vegetation. The overall appearance of the road would become more standardised.

- 2.11.7** A new roundabout would be introduced on the B970, which would change the linear character of this section of the road corridor due to the scale and geometry of the roundabout. Lighting columns associated with the roundabout would be introduced. This would result in some loss of existing tree cover in this area, and some further tree loss would be associated with the provision of the entrance to the proposed new community at the east end of the High Street.
- 2.11.8** New built development would be introduced which is not currently present within this LLCA. Whilst this development would be on a similar scale and extent to that already existing at Coylumbridge, a small hamlet adjacent to the LLCA, it would be of a very different density and character, comprising predominantly of town houses, apartments and other buildings up to 15m in height. This would involve some tree loss to both the eastern woodland edge to the development site and to the area of scattered trees within the site, although detailed designs would attempt to retain as many isolated existing mature trees as possible, and new tree planting would be introduced along streets, within gardens and along plot boundaries. The overall wooded character of the LLCA would not be altered, as the major areas of woodland cover within the LLCA would be retained intact. The new built development would be relatively contained in extent within the overall extent of the LLCA, although it would introduce urbanisation which is currently absent.
- 2.11.9** Sections of new pedestrian / cycleway routes would be introduced through the core of the overall An Camas Mòr site. These would in places be extensions of existing tracks, and would be aligned to avoid the removal of existing trees.
- 2.11.10** New services would be laid to serve the new community, following the alignment of the pedestrian / cycleway route which connects outwith the LLCA to the B970 near the substation at Inverdrue. A foul pumped sewer would be laid extending to a pumping station located towards the western section of the site. This is likely to involve some tree removal along its alignment as the route would be located predominantly within areas of retained existing woodland. Loss of existing trees would be minimised as much as possible.
- 2.11.11** All existing mature trees which are to be incorporated into the detailed design of the new community layout would be protected. New boundary tree belt planting would be undertaken within the south-west corner of the site for the proposed new community, at the periphery of the LLCA. It would follow established boundary lines in this area, and supplement existing planting within and adjacent to this area. This new planting would be similar in character to the existing woodlands on the site and would define the boundary to the proposed new community. New tree planting would be introduced associated with new streets, in gardens and along plot boundaries within the Period A development extent.
- 2.11.12** In overall terms, the large majority of the LLCA would not be physically affected by the extent of development associated with the Assessment Period A works.
- 2.11.13** Given the introduction of new built development and its associated infrastructure, albeit on a relatively limited scale, into this LLCA where such development is currently absent, and the changes to the existing B970, it is considered that the magnitude of change resulting from the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period A to this LLCA would be **medium**, as this would be considered as a considerable change to the character of the LLCA.

## Nature and Significance of Effect

- 2.11.14** The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period A on this LLCA can be summarised as follows:
- New built development would be introduced to the LLCA where none currently exists, introducing a process of urbanisation into a LLCA which is strongly rural in character;
  - The footprint of the new built development introduced at this stage would be on the scale of a small village, although it would have a more dense building pattern and character untypical of similar scaled villages in Strathspey, although akin in shape and mass to a traditional High Street character;
  - The heights of most buildings would be higher than most existing buildings within the surrounding area, but over time would be lower than the mature tree canopy level;
  - The overall extent of new built development would be relatively limited within the overall LLCA;
  - The character of sections of the existing B970 road between Coylumbridge and Nethy Bridge would be altered through changes to its geometry and the introduction of areas of street lighting, which is not present on this section of road;
  - The overall pattern and extent of woodland tree cover within the LLCA would be essentially retained, although there would be some tree loss at the eastern edge of the LLCA;
  - New tree planting would be of a limited height and stature;
  - The key landform characteristic of the elevated plateau of the LLCA would be retained;
  - The sensitivity of the LLCA is considered to be medium; and
  - The character of the LLCA would be altered, but on a scale and extent which would not change the essential characteristics of the LLCA.
- 2.11.15** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period A would have a **moderate adverse effect** on the 'Elevated Woodlands' LLCA, which would be permanent, as there would be a considerable change to the undeveloped character of the LLCA, although its key landscape characteristics of an elevated woodland plateau would be retained.

## 'Heathland / Pasture' LLCA

### Changes to the Landscape Resource

- 2.11.16** There would be no works undertaken within this LLCA as part of the Assessment Period A works. Any works to the B970 associated with the introduction of the roundabout would be undertaken on the west side of the road within the 'Elevated Woodlands' LLCA, and would therefore not result in any physical changes to the 'Heathland/Pasture' LLCA. New built

development would be introduced on the west side of the B970 and would be visible from within this LLCA, although views westward from this LLCA are not an important characteristic of the LLCA.

- 2.11.17 Given that there would be no works undertaken within this LLCA, it is considered that the magnitude of change resulting from the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period A to this LLCA would be **negligible**, as this would be considered as no change to the character of the LLCA.

### Nature and Significance of Effect

- 2.11.18 The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period A on this LLCA can be summarised as follows:

- There would be no physical changes to the character of this LLCA;
- New built development would be introduced close to the western boundary of this LLCA, although views westwards from within this LLCA are not a key characteristic of this LLCA; and
- The sensitivity of the LLCA is considered to be high.

- 2.11.19 Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period A would have a **no effect** on the 'Heathland/Pasture' LLCA, as there would only be a negligible or no change to the characteristics of the LLCA.

### 'Cultivated Fields' LLCA

#### Changes to the Landscape Resource

- 2.11.20 A section of the main pedestrian / cycleway route system passes through this LLCA along the top of the escarpment. This may involve some detailed minor vegetation clearance to achieve a suitable alignment to the pedestrian / cycleway route, but this would not change the overall vegetation pattern of the LLCA. The intention would be to avoid or minimise such vegetation loss. The pedestrian / cycleway route would be lit by low-level lighting bollards. There would also be some minor loss of part of an existing agricultural field to accommodate the pedestrian / cycleway route, but the overall pattern of fields throughout the LLCA would remain intact. New built development within the eastern section of the 'Elevated Woodlands' LLCA would be predominantly screened by the existing woodlands along the eastern boundary of the LLCA. The large majority of the LLCA would be unaltered by the works associated with Assessment Period A.
- 2.11.21 Given that there would be very limited works undertaken within this LLCA, it is considered that the magnitude of change resulting from the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period A to this LLCA would be **low**, as the introduction of the pedestrian / cycleway route would be a noticeable change to the character of the LLCA.

### Nature and Significance of Effect

- 2.11.22 The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period A on this LLCA can be summarised as follows:

- Very limited works would be introduced into this LLCA;
- The large majority of the LLCA would be unaffected by the introduction of the pedestrian / cycleway route;
- Retained woodland within the 'Elevated Woodlands' LLCA would restrict visibility of the new built development; and
- The sensitivity of the LLCA is considered to be high.

- 2.11.23 Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period A would have a **slight adverse effect** on the 'Cultivated Fields' LLCA, which would be permanent, as whilst there would be some change to the LLCA, its intrinsic characteristics would be retained.

### 'Flood Plain Agricultural Land' LLCA

#### Changes to the Landscape Resource

- 2.11.24 A section of the main pedestrian / cycleway route system would pass through the central section of this LLCA from the escarpment along its northern boundary to a crossing of the River Druie near the existing substation. This route would cut across the existing field pattern, although field boundaries would be restructured to relate to the path alignment. There would be some loss of existing agricultural fields, although such loss would be minimal. The pedestrian / cycleway route would be lit by low-level lighting bollards. A service corridor would follow the alignment of the pedestrian / cycleway route, incorporating all required services for the proposed new community and involving associated trenching and backfilling. Some earthworks would be undertaken at the southern boundary of the LLCA associated with the pedestrian footbridge and culverts over the River Druie, but these would be very limited in relation to their extent and the general landform characteristics of the LLCA would be retained. The large majority of the LLCA would be unaltered by the works associated with Assessment Period A.
- 2.11.25 Given that there would be very limited works undertaken within this LLCA, it is considered that the magnitude of change resulting from the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period A to this LLCA would be **low**, as the introduction of the pedestrian / cycleway route would be a noticeable change to the character of the LLCA.

### Nature and Significance of Effect

- 2.11.26 The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period A on this LLCA can be summarised as follows:

- Very limited works would be introduced into this LLCA;

- Some field restructuring would be undertaken but the general agricultural character of the LLCA would be retained;
- The large majority of the LLCA would be unaffected by the introduction of the pedestrian / cycleway route;
- Retained woodland within the 'Elevated Woodlands' LLCA would restrict any visibility of the new built development; and
- The sensitivity of the LLCA is considered to be high.

**2.11.27** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period A would have a **slight adverse effect** on the 'Flood Plain Agricultural Land' LLCA, which would be permanent, as whilst there would be some change to the LLCA, its intrinsic characteristics would be retained.

## Wider Landscape Setting

### 'Speyside' LCA

#### Changes to the Landscape Resource

- 2.11.28** An Camas Mòr would introduce an area of new built development into the LCA, although the extent of this built development would be very limited in relation to the overall scale and extent of the LCA. The pattern and mix of open spaces, woodlands, pasture and settlement throughout the LCA would not be substantially altered, and the general wooded character of the strath would not be changed by the introduction of the built development associated with Assessment Period A. The built development of the proposed new community would essentially be located within a surrounding zone of woodland, such that the pattern of open agricultural lands and tree belts of the local area would not be altered. Whilst the introduction of new built development and its associated infrastructure would result in some further urbanisation within the LCA, this would be of a limited nature within the overall context of the LCA, and its predominantly rural character would not be altered.
- 2.11.29** Outwith the LLCAs, in the vicinity of the substation close to the B970 at Inverdrue, a new pedestrian footbridge and associated flood relief culverts would be introduced over the River Drue and its associated channels. The foundations for the future distributor road bridge over the River Drue in this area would also be constructed with their associated earthworks. These works would necessitate some removal of existing open riparian woodland in this area. Whilst these works would result in a considerable change in the existing wooded character in this local area, the extent of these works would be very limited in relation to the overall LCA, and its overall character would not be altered. Some upgrading of the substation itself would be undertaken, although this would not change the extent of the substation footprint or necessitate any works outside its current boundary. Some minor modification to the access road to the substation would be undertaken.
- 2.11.30** Between the B970 and the River Spey, to the north of the Corrou House Hotel, an area of wet alder woodland would be established as compensation for similar habitat to be lost as part of the development of the proposed new community, on an area currently comprising neutral or

marshy grassland. Establishment would be by direct planting of alder. This proposal would continue similar woodland planting on adjacent areas and which is a characteristic of areas along the River Spey.

- 2.11.31** The site of An Camas Mòr is located on a raised river terrace above the river flood plain, and set within a woodland context, and consequently follows the traditional locational characteristic of most other settlements along the River Spey, although it is located on the east side of the river whilst the majority of the existing settlements associated with the River Spey corridor are located on the west side of the river.
- 2.11.32** The introduction of the built development into the 'Elevated Woodland' LLCA within this LCA in Assessment Period A would result in a moderate adverse, and therefore significant, effect, but this would be a localised effect within the LCA and other associated effects to other LLCAs would not be of a significant nature, such that these would have no significant effect on the overall characteristics of the LCA.
- 2.11.33** The site of An Camas Mòr is located within an area categorised as having 'low wildness' as identified in the draft 'Wildness' study carried out for CNPA. The combination of accessibility through the existing road network, associated built development, occurrence of other man-made features and the plantation forests of the local area all contribute to this categorisation. The introduction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period A would continue the humanisation which is a typical characteristic of the 'Speyside' LCA, and would reinforce the categorisation of the An Camas Mòr area as being in an area of 'low wildness'.
- 2.11.34** Given the relatively limited scale of introduction of new built development and its associated infrastructure into this LCA, where such built development is currently part of the character of the LCA, and that the predominantly rural and wooded character of the LCA would be retained, it is considered that the magnitude of change resulting from the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period A to this LCA would be **low**, as this would be considered as a noticeable change to the character of the LCA.

## Nature and Significance of Effect

- 2.11.35** The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period A on this LCA can be summarised as follows:
- New built development would be introduced to the LCA in an area of the LCA where none currently exists, although built development is a component of the key characteristics of the LCA;
  - The overall extent of new built development would be relatively limited within the overall LCA, and the general rural and wooded character of the LCA would be retained;
  - The key landscape characteristics of the strath in terms of its landform, woodland pattern and open agricultural land use would be retained;
  - New wet alder woodland would be established within a small area of the LCA as compensation habitat, but would not be of sufficient growth to contribute positively to the local woodland character and pattern of the area;

- A moderate adverse impact would occur to the 'Elevated Woodland' LLCA within this LCA but this would not be of such a scale and extent to impact on the overall characteristics of the LCA;
- The low – medium classification of the LCA in terms of 'wildness' would not be altered by the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period A;
- The sensitivity of the LCA is considered to be medium; and
- The character of the LCA would be slightly altered, but on a scale and extent which would not change the essential characteristics of the LCA.

**2.11.36** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period A would have a **slight adverse effect** on the 'Speyside' LCA, as An Camas Mòr would introduce a new built component to the landscape but the intrinsic characteristics of the LCA would be retained.

## Other LCAs of the Wider Landscape Setting

### Changes to the Landscape Resource

- 2.11.37** An Camas Mòr and its associated features would not be located within any of the LCAs which contribute to the wider landscape setting of the An Camas Mòr site, and therefore there would be no direct physical changes to the key characteristics of these LCAs. The introduction of An Camas Mòr during Assessment Period A would not result in any changes to the landscape pattern within the 'Speyside' LCA which would affect the landscape characteristics of neighbouring LCAs, nor affect the current inter-relationship between the LCAs within the wider setting of An Camas Mòr. The LCAs of the wider setting are of a considerable geographic extent in relation to the introduction of An Camas Mòr during Assessment Period A, and whilst limited views of An Camas Mòr may be available from elevated locations within some of the LCAs, these would mostly be at distances in excess of 5km and it is considered unlikely that these would change the key characteristics of the LCAs concerned.
- 2.11.38** In the lower reaches of the Lairig Ghru within the 'Central Massif' LCA, at the very boundary of the LCA, it is proposed that an area of mixed birch and pine native woodland would be established as compensation for areas of native woodland to be lost as part of the development of the proposed new community. Natural succession of heathland would be encouraged to develop into mixed native montane scrub woodland at the maximum natural elevation of tree growth within the area. The area of compensation land would be very small in relation to the overall scale of the LCA. Inevitably, tree growth would be very slow at this altitude and any changes to the character of the local area affected would occur over an extended time period, such that a gradual transition from heathland to montane scrub woodland would occur. In the long term, the montane scrub woodland would be very open in character and comprise of trees of limited height and stature, around 2–3 m in height maximum forming a transition from the more heavily wooded lower slope areas to the open hillsides above.
- 2.11.39** Around the summit slopes of Ord Ban within the 'Badenoch' LCA, it is proposed that an area of heathland is established as compensation habitat for similar habitat to be lost as part of the development of the proposed new community. This area was historically heathland but has been included within a Woodland Grant Scheme, much of which has been unsuccessful in

establishing. The area of compensation land would be very small in relation to the overall scale of the LCA.

**2.11.40** It is not considered that the introduction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period A would result in any changes to the categorisation of 'wildness' throughout the LCAs of the wider landscape setting to An Camas Mòr, through a reduction in their relative level of 'wildness', and that the overall pattern of 'wildness' categories throughout the wider landscape setting would be retained.

**2.11.41** Given that the location of the An Camas Mòr development would be positioned outwith the LCAs of the wider landscape setting of An Camas Mòr, it is considered that the magnitude of change resulting from the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period A to the LCAs of the wider landscape setting would be **negligible**, as there may be discernable changes to landscape characteristics outwith the LCAs concerned but at distances in excess of 5 km. There would be very little evidence of any landscape change related to the compensation native woodland within the Lairig Ghru.

## Nature and Significance of Effect

**2.11.42** The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period A on the LCAs of the wider landscape setting can be summarised as follows:

- An Camas Mòr would not be located within these LCAs;
- There would be no physical changes to the characteristics of these LCAs as a result of the development of An Camas Mòr;
- There would be no alteration to the key characteristics of the 'Central Massif' LCA resulting from the proposed compensation habitat;
- There would be no alteration to the key characteristics of the 'Badenoch' LCA resulting from the proposed compensation habitat;
- There would be no alteration to the classification and pattern of 'wildness' throughout these LCAs; and
- The sensitivity of these LCAs is high – medium.

**2.11.43** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period A would have **no effect** on the LCAs of the wider landscape setting of the site of An Camas Mòr, as any changes which might occur would be of a negligible nature.

## The Cairngorms National Park

### Changes to the Landscape Resource

**2.11.44** The various changes have been described within the preceding sections of this assessment

## Nature and Significance of Effect

**2.11.45** The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period A on the landscape of the Cairngorms National Park can be summarised as follows:

- Whilst there would be a moderate adverse effect on the 'Elevated Woodlands' LLCA, this effect would be very localised in relation to the overall extent of the National Park and in overall terms, the distinctive landscapes throughout not just the wider setting of An Camas Mòr but the National Park as a whole would not be materially affected;
- The combination, interaction and juxtaposition of the range of landscape types and components throughout the Park and which make it special would not be significantly altered by the introduction of An Camas Mòr;
- An Camas Mòr would not be located within the central mountain area of the Park, and would therefore not affect the most striking and dominant landscape feature of the Park;
- The specific site of An Camas Mòr does not make a significant contribution to the landscape of the National Park or its distinctive landscapes;
- Whilst the introduction of the proposed new community would result in some loss of trees within the Strathspey pine forests, this loss would be minimal within the context of the overall extent of the forest, and agreed woodland management for the Rothiemurchus area aims to retain the overall pattern and extent of woodlands throughout the area;
- An Camas Mòr represents the introduction of a planned community within the Park, continuing a tradition and legacy of planned settlements and built development which extends throughout the lower areas of the Park;
- Given the location of An Camas Mòr, the sense of 'wildness' within the montane area of the National Park would not be affected, the introduction of An Camas Mòr would reinforce the categorisation of the area around An Camas Mòr as being of 'low wildness', and the overall pattern of 'wildness' categories throughout the National Park would be retained; and
- The sensitivity of the National Park is considered to be high.

**2.11.46** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period A would have a **slight adverse effect** on the landscape of the Cairngorms National Park.

### Assessment Period B

#### Local Landscape Setting

#### 'Elevated Woodlands' LLCA

## Changes to the Landscape Resource

**2.11.47** The following changes would be additional to those identified in Assessment Period A.

**2.11.48** A section of the B970 road would be upgraded to the north of the roundabout introduced in Assessment Period A which would alter the character of this section of road through a combination of the introduction of a new and continuous edge detail to the road on its western side and the unifying of the road width. This upgrade would extend to a point approximately halfway along the boundary of An Camas Mòr, where a new access 'T' junction with associated street lighting serving the proposed new community would join the B970. This section of upgraded road would continue the road character already established in Assessment Period A for the length of road from Coylumbridge. The section of the B970 to the north of the new access junction would be retained in its existing condition.

**2.11.49** Further built development and associated infrastructure would be introduced as an extension to that included within Assessment Period A, extending in a northerly and westerly direction into the LLCA from the Assessment Period A development. This would establish further areas of built development of different densities, extending northwards and westwards from the central higher density zone of the High Street. Building heights would be up to 15 m in the high density zone. The extent of built development within the LLCA would remain relatively limited in relation to the overall extent of the LLCA, although its overall development footprint would be roughly similar to that of Dalfaber on the north-eastern edge of Aviemore, and the process of urbanisation commenced in Assessment Period A would be continued. New pedestrian / cycleway connections between the Assessment Period A and B developments would also be introduced, as well as services provision within corridors associated with the Assessment Period B layout. Terminal pumping of the foul sewer system would be expanded.

**2.11.50** There would be likely to be some minor tree loss in relation to the introduction of buildings and roads, predominantly within an area of open ground with trees, although existing individual trees would be retained where possible and new tree planting would be introduced associated with new streets, in gardens and along plot boundaries. In overall terms, the wooded character of the LLCA would not be altered, as the major areas of woodland cover within the LLCA would be retained intact. New tree planting undertaken in Assessment Period A would have had a maximum of 8 years of growth, but would not be of a height or stature to offset the scale of built development introduced into the LLCA.

**2.11.51** Given the introduction of further new built development and its associated infrastructure into this LLCA, and the changes to the existing B970, it is considered that the magnitude of change resulting from the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period B to this LLCA would be **medium**, as this would be considered as a considerable change to the character of the LLCA.

## Nature and Significance of Effect

**2.11.52** The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period B on this LLCA can be summarised as follows:

- New built development would be introduced to the LLCA, introducing a process of urbanisation into a LLCA which is strongly rural in character;

- The overall extent of new built development would be relatively limited within the overall LLCA;
- Further alterations to the B970 road between Coylumbridge and Nethy Bridge would be undertaken, continuing the process of such changes introduced in Assessment Period A;
- The overall pattern and extent of woodland tree cover within the LLCA would be essentially retained, although there would be some tree loss;
- New tree planting undertaken in Assessment Period A would still be of a limited height and stature;
- The key landform characteristic of the elevated plateau of the LLCA would be retained;
- The sensitivity of the LLCA is considered to be medium; and
- The character of the LLCA would be altered, but on a scale and extent which would not change the essential characteristics of the LLCA.

**2.11.53** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period B would have a **moderate adverse effect** on the 'Elevated Woodlands' LLCA, which would be permanent, as there would be a considerable change to the undeveloped character of the LLCA, although its key landscape characteristics of an elevated woodland plateau would be retained.

### 'Heathland / Pasture' LLCA

#### Changes to the Landscape Resource

- 2.11.54** The following changes would be additional to those identified in Assessment Period A.
- 2.11.55** There would be no works undertaken within this LLCA as part of the Assessment Period B works. Any works to the B970 would be undertaken on the west side of the road, within the 'Elevated Woodlands' LLCA, and would therefore not result in any physical changes to the 'Heathland / Pasture' LLCA. Further new built development would be introduced on the west side of the B970 and would be visible from within the LLCA, although views out from the LLCA are not an important characteristic of the LLCA. The pattern of open space and tree belts along the western side of the B970 would be commenced, although would not be particularly visible at this stage, and existing retained trees along the eastern side of the An Camas Mòr site would not provide effective screening of this built development at this time.
- 2.11.56** Given that there would be no works undertaken within this LLCA, it is considered that the magnitude of change resulting from the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period B to this LLCA would be **negligible**, as this would be considered as no change to the character of the LLCA.

### Nature and Significance of Effect

- 2.11.57** The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period B on this LLCA can be summarised as follows:
- There would be no physical changes to the character of this LLCA;
  - New built development would be introduced close to the western boundary of this LLCA, although views from within this LLCA are not a key characteristic of this LLCA; and
  - The sensitivity of the LLCA is considered to be high.
- 2.11.58** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period B would have **no effect** on the 'Heathland / Pasture' LLCA, as there would only be a negligible or no change to the characteristics of the LLCA.

### 'Cultivated Fields' LLCA

#### Changes to the Landscape Resource

- 2.11.59** The following changes would be additional to those identified in Assessment Period A.
- 2.11.60** There would be no changes to this LLCA as result of the works associated with Assessment Period B.
- 2.11.61** Given that there would be very limited works undertaken within this LLCA, it is considered that the magnitude of change resulting from the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period B to this LLCA would be **low**, as the introduction of the pedestrian / cycleway route would be a noticeable change to the character of the LLCA.

### Nature and Significance of Effect

- 2.11.62** The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period B on this LLCA can be summarised as follows:
- Very limited works would be introduced into this LLCA;
  - The large majority of the LLCA would be unaffected by the introduction of the pedestrian / cycleway route;
  - Retained woodland within the 'Elevated Woodlands' LLCA would restrict any visibility of the new built development; and
  - The sensitivity of the LLCA is considered to be high.
- 2.11.63** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period B would have a **slight adverse effect** on the 'Cultivated Fields' LLCA,

which would be permanent, as whilst there would be some change to the LLCA, its intrinsic characteristics would be retained.

### ‘Flood Plain Agricultural Land’ LLCA

#### Changes to the Landscape Resource

- 2.11.64** The following changes would be additional to those identified in Assessment Period A.
- 2.11.65** There would be no changes to this LLCA as result of the works associated with Assessment Period B.
- 2.11.66** Given that there would be very limited works undertaken within this LLCA, it is considered that the magnitude of change resulting from the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period B to this LLCA would be **low**, as the introduction of the pedestrian / cycleway route would be a noticeable change to the character of the LLCA.

#### Nature and Significance of Effect

- 2.11.67** The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period B on this LLCA can be summarised as follows:
- Very limited works would be introduced into this LLCA;
  - The large majority of the LLCA would be unaffected by the introduction of the pedestrian / cycleway route;
  - Retained woodland within the ‘Elevated Woodlands’ LLCA would restrict any visibility of the new built development; and
  - The sensitivity of the LLCA is considered to be high.
- 2.11.68** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period B would have a **slight adverse effect** on the ‘Flood Plain Agricultural Land’ LLCA, which would be permanent, as whilst there would be some change to the LLCA, its intrinsic characteristics would be retained.

#### Wider Landscape Setting

### ‘Speyside’ LCA

#### Changes to the Landscape Resource

- 2.11.69** The following changes would be additional to those identified in Assessment Period A.
- 2.11.70** An Camas Mòr would introduce an additional area of new built development into the LCA, on the east side of the River Spey, as an extension of that previously introduced in Assessment Period A. Currently, the majority of the existing settlements associated with the River Spey

corridor are located on the west side of the river. The extent of this built development would remain very limited in relation to the overall scale and extent of the LCA. The pattern and mix of open spaces, woodlands, pasture and settlement throughout the LCA would not be substantially altered, and the general wooded character of the strath would not be changed by the introduction of the built development associated with Assessment Period B. The built development of the proposed new community would essentially be located within a surrounding zone of woodland, such that the pattern of open agricultural lands and tree belts of the local area would not be altered. Whilst the introduction of new built development and its associated infrastructure would result in some further urbanisation within the LCA, this would be of a limited nature within the overall context of the LCA, and its predominantly rural character would not be altered.

- 2.11.71** Growth of the compensation alder woodland would at this period not have developed to a height and density where it would contribute positively to the local woodland pattern and character of the area.
- 2.11.72** The introduction of the built development into the ‘Elevated Woodland’ LLCA within this LCA in Assessment Period B would result in a moderate adverse, and therefore significant, effect, but this would be a localised effect within the LCA and other associated effects to other LLCAs would not be of a significant nature, such that these would have no significant effect on the overall characteristics of the LCA.
- 2.11.73** The site of An Camas Mòr is located within an area categorised as having ‘low wildness’ as identified in the draft ‘Wildness’ study carried out for CNPA. The combination of accessibility through the existing road network, associated built development, occurrence of other man-made features and the plantation forests of the local area all contribute to this categorisation. The introduction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period B would continue the humanisation which is a typical characteristic of the ‘Speyside’ LCA, and would reinforce the categorisation of the An Camas Mòr area as being in an area of ‘low wildness’.
- 2.11.74** Given the relatively limited scale of introduction of new built development and its associated infrastructure into this LCA, where such built development is currently part of the character of the LCA, and that the predominantly rural and wooded character of the LCA would be retained, it is considered that the magnitude of change resulting from the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period B to this LCA would be **low**, as this would be considered as a noticeable change to the character of the LCA.

#### Nature and Significance of Effect

- 2.11.75** The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period B on this LCA can be summarised as follows:
- New built development would be introduced to the LCA, although built development is a component of the key characteristics of the LCA;
  - The overall extent of new built development would be relatively limited within the overall LCA, and the general rural and wooded character of the LCA would be retained;
  - The key landscape characteristics of the strath in terms of its landform, woodland pattern and open agricultural land use would be retained;

- New wet alder woodland would be established within a small area of the LCA as compensation habitat, but would not be of sufficient growth to contribute positively to the local woodland character and pattern of the area;
- A moderate adverse impact would occur to the 'Elevated Woodland' LLCA within this LCA but this would not be of such a scale and extent to impact on the overall characteristics of the LCA;
- The low – medium classification of the LCA in terms of 'wildness' would not be altered by the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period B;
- The sensitivity of the LCA is considered to be medium; and
- The character of the LCA would be slightly altered, but on a scale and extent which would not change the essential characteristics of the LCA.

**2.11.76** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period B would have a **slight adverse effect** on the 'Speyside' LCA, as An Camas Mòr would introduce a new built component to the landscape but the intrinsic characteristics of the LCA would be retained.

### Other LCAs of the Wider Landscape Setting

#### Changes to the Landscape Resource

- 2.11.77** The following changes would be additional to those identified in Assessment Period A.
- 2.11.78** An Camas Mòr and its associated features would not be located within any of the LCAs which contribute to the wider landscape setting of the An Camas Mòr site, and therefore there would be no direct physical changes to the key characteristics of these LCAs. The introduction of the proposed new community during Assessment Period B would not result in any changes to the landscape pattern within the 'Speyside' LCA which would affect the landscape characteristics of neighbouring LCAs, nor affect the current inter-relationship between the LCAs within the wider setting of An Camas Mòr. The LCAs of the wider setting are of a considerable scale and geographic extent in relation to the introduction of the proposed new community during Assessment Period B, and whilst limited views of the proposed new community may be available from elevated locations within some of the LCAs, these would mostly be at distances in excess of 5 km and it is considered unlikely that these would change the key characteristics of the LCAs.
- 2.11.79** Some limited natural succession from heathland to mixed native woodland would be evident in the lower reaches of the Lairig Ghru within the 'Central Massif' LCA related to the compensation habitat proposed, but any tree growth would be very limited in height and density and in terms of the overall LCA, there would be no change to the key characteristics of the 'Central Massif' LCA.
- 2.11.80** Some limited change to heathland would be evident on Ord Ban within the 'Badenoch' LCA, but in terms of the overall LCA, there would be no change to the key characteristics of the 'Badenoch' LCA.

**2.11.81** It is not considered that the introduction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period B would result in any changes to the categorisation of 'wildness' throughout the LCAs of the wider landscape setting to An Camas Mòr, through a reduction in their relative level of 'wildness', and that the overall pattern of 'wildness' categories throughout the wider landscape setting would be retained.

**2.11.82** Given that the location of An Camas Mòr would be positioned outwith the LCAs of the wider landscape setting of An Camas Mòr, it is considered that the magnitude of change resulting from the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period B to the LCAs of the wider landscape setting would be **negligible**, as there may be discernable changes to landscape characteristics outwith the LCAs concerned but at distances in excess of 5 km.

### Nature and Significance of Effect

**2.11.83** The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period B on the LCAs of the wider landscape setting can be summarised as follows:

- An Camas Mòr would not be located within these LCAs;
- There would be no physical changes to the characteristics of these LCAs as a result of the development of An Camas Mòr;
- There would be no alteration to the key characteristics of the 'Central Massif' LCA resulting from the proposed compensation habitat;
- There would be no alteration to the key characteristics of the 'Badenoch' LCA resulting from the proposed compensation habitat;
- There would be no alteration to the classification and pattern of 'wildness' throughout these LCAs; and
- The sensitivity of these LCAs is high – medium.

**2.11.84** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period B would have **no effect** on the LCAs of the wider landscape setting of the site of An Camas Mòr, as any changes which might occur would be of a negligible nature.

### The Cairngorms National Park

#### Changes to the Landscape Resource

**2.11.85** The various changes have been described within the preceding sections of this assessment

### Nature and Significance of Effect

**2.11.86** The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period B on the landscape of the Cairngorms National Park can be summarised as follows:

- Whilst there would be a moderate adverse effect on the 'Elevated Woodlands' LLCA, this effect would be very localised in relation to the overall extent of the National Park and in overall terms, the distinctive landscapes throughout not just the wider setting of An Camas Mòr but the National Park as a whole would not be materially affected;
- The combination, interaction and juxtaposition of the range of landscape types and components throughout the Park and which make it special would not be significantly altered by the introduction of An Camas Mòr;
- An Camas Mòr would not be located within the central mountain area of the Park, and would therefore not affect the most striking and dominant landscape feature of the Park;
- The specific site of An Camas Mòr does not make a significant contribution to the landscape of the National Park or its distinctive landscapes;
- Whilst the introduction of the proposed new community would result in some loss of trees within the Strathspey pine forests, this loss would be minimal within the context of the overall extent of the forest, and agreed woodland management for the Rothiemurchus area aims to retain the overall pattern and extent of woodlands throughout the area;
- An Camas Mòr represents the introduction of a planned community within the Park, continuing a tradition and legacy of planned settlements and built development which extends throughout the lower areas of the Park;
- Given the location of An Camas Mòr, the sense of 'wildness' within the montane area of the National Park would not be affected, the introduction of An Camas Mòr would reinforce the categorisation of the area around An Camas Mòr as being of 'low wildness', and the overall pattern of 'wildness' categories throughout the National Park would be retained; and
- The sensitivity of the National Park is considered to be high.

**2.11.87** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period B would have a **slight adverse effect** on the landscape of the Cairngorms National Park.

### **Assessment Period C**

#### **Local Landscape Setting**

#### **'Elevated Woodlands' LLCA**

#### **Changes to the Landscape Resource**

**2.11.88** The following changes would be additional to those identified in Assessment Periods A and B.

**2.11.89** Further built development and associated infrastructure would be introduced as an extension to that included within Assessment Periods A and B, extending in a westerly direction into the LLCA. This would further establish built development of different densities, extending the central higher density zone of the High Street, with building heights up to 15 m westwards, as well as other areas of lower densities to the south of the High Street. A bus route and turning head would be extended westwards beyond the end of the High Street. The school site reservation would be introduced into the area of retained woodland north of the bus turning head, involving the removal of existing trees within this area. The extent of built development within the LLCA would still be relatively limited in relation to the overall extent of the LLCA, predominantly affecting an area of scattered trees within the LLCA, and the overall woodland pattern of the LLCA would essentially be retained. There would be likely to be some minor tree loss in relation to the introduction of buildings and roads, although existing individual trees would be retained where possible and new tree planting would be introduced associated with new streets, in gardens and along plot boundaries, and the overall wooded character of the LLCA would not be altered, as the major areas of woodland would be retained intact. Tree planting associated with Assessment Period A would have had 10 years of growth, and would be beginning to contribute to the general pattern and extent of tree cover within the proposed new community, and adding to the woodland setting and character of the proposed new community, although built development would remain the dominant characteristic over the area developed.

**2.11.90** An access route for construction traffic would be introduced within the southern section of the LLCA, extending into the adjacent 'Flood Plain Agricultural Land' LLCA. This would be likely to result in the removal of various trees in this area, although its detailed routing would be designed to minimise such tree loss.

### **Nature and Significance of Effect**

**2.11.91** The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period C on this LLCA can be summarised as follows:

- New built development would be introduced to the LLCA, introducing a process of urbanisation into a LLCA which is strongly rural in character;
- The overall extent of new built development would occupy less than 50 % of the area of the LLCA, but the general character of the LLCA would be considerably altered through the introduction of the scale of built development concerned;
- The overall pattern and extent of woodland tree cover within the LLCA would be essentially retained, as the built development would be located predominantly within the area of scattered trees within the LLCA, many of which would be retained as part of the detailed design process, although the school reservation site would be likely to result in considerable tree loss over its area. The construction route would not pass through a significant section of established woodland;
- New tree planting undertaken in Assessment Period A would still be of a limited height and stature in relation to the scale of built development associated with the higher and medium density zones, which occupies the majority of the developed area at this stage;
- The key landform characteristic of the elevated plateau of the LLCA would be retained;

- The sensitivity of the LLCA is considered to be medium; and
- The character of the LLCA would be altered, but on a scale and extent which would not change the essential characteristics of the LLCA.

**2.11.92** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period C would have a **moderate adverse effect** on the 'Elevated Woodlands' LLCA which would be permanent, as there would be a considerable change to the undeveloped character of the LLCA, although its key landscape characteristics of an elevated woodland plateau would be retained.

### 'Heathland / Pasture' LLCA

#### Changes to the Landscape Resource

- 2.11.93** The following changes would be additional to those identified in Assessment Periods A and B.
- 2.11.94** There would be no works undertaken within this LLCA as part of the Assessment Period C works. Further new built development would be introduced on the west side of the B970 and would be visible from within the LLCA, although views out from the LLCA are not an important characteristic of the LLCA. The pattern of open space and tree belts along the western side of the B970 would be developing as existing retained trees develop, although they would not provide effective screening of this built development at this time.
- 2.11.95** Given that there would be no works undertaken within this LLCA, it is considered that the magnitude of change resulting from the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period C to this LLCA would be **negligible**, as this would be considered as no change to the character of the LLCA.

#### Nature and Significance of Effect

- 2.11.96** The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period C on this LLCA can be summarised as follows:
- There would be no physical changes to the character of this LLCA;
  - New built development would be introduced close to the western boundary of this LLCA, although views from within this LLCA are not a key characteristic of this LLCA; and
  - The sensitivity of the LLCA is considered to be high.
- 2.11.97** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period C would have **no effect** on the 'Heathland / Pasture' LLCA, as there would only be a negligible or no change to the characteristics of the LLCA.

### 'Cultivated Fields' LLCA

#### Changes to the Landscape Resource

- 2.11.98** The following changes would be additional to those identified in Assessment Periods A and B.
- 2.11.99** A playing field allocation associated with the school would be introduced into the LLCA on its eastern side, comprising grass playing pitches. There would be a loss of existing agricultural land over the area concerned, although the existing open character of the LLCA would be retained. Agricultural use would continue up to the edge of the pitches.
- 2.11.100** Given that there would be very limited works undertaken within this LLCA, it is considered that the magnitude of change resulting from the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period C to this LLCA would be **low**, as the introduction of the playing field allocation would be a noticeable change to the character of the LLCA.

#### Nature and Significance of Effect

- 2.11.101** The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period C on this LLCA can be summarised as follows:
- Very limited works would be introduced into this LLCA;
  - The playing field allocation is part of a longer term plan by others to establish a riverside parkland corridor throughout this LLCA, which is likely to change the character of this area;
  - The large majority of the LLCA would be unaffected by the introduction of the playing field allocation;
  - Retained woodland within the 'Elevated Woodlands' LLCA would restrict any visibility of the new built development; and
  - The sensitivity of the LLCA is considered to be high.
- 2.11.102** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period C would have a **slight adverse effect** on the 'Cultivated Fields' LLCA, which would be permanent, as whilst there would be some change to the LLCA, its intrinsic characteristics would be retained.

### 'Flood Plain Agricultural Land' LLCA

#### Changes to the Landscape Resource

- 2.11.103** The following changes would be additional to those identified in Assessment Periods A and B.
- 2.11.104** A construction access route and associated earthworks would be introduced through the central section of this LLCA, linking the An Camas Mòr site to the B970 in the vicinity of the substation outwith the boundary of this LLCA. The construction access route would generally

follow the existing ground level, generally no more or less than around 300 mm above the existing ground level, except where the construction access crosses the escarpment which bounds the LLCA to the north, where associated earthwork embankments would extend partially into the generally flat floor of the agricultural land, although this would be of a limited extent in relation to the overall scale of the LLCA. The alignment of existing field boundary fences would be altered to correspond with the alignment of the construction route corridor, as several fields would be subdivided by the introduction of the route, although the overall pattern of fields would be retained. Hedge planting with occasional trees would be introduced along the fences defining the route corridor. The construction access route would not receive a final surfacing but all associated earthworks, verge seeding, hedge and tree planting and fencing along the road corridor would be undertaken within Assessment Period C.

**2.11.105** Whilst there would be limited works undertaken within this LLCA, given the nature and location of these, it is considered that the magnitude of change resulting from the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period C to this LLCA would be **medium**, as the introduction of the construction access route and pedestrian / cycleway route would be a considerable change to the character of the LLCA.

### Nature and Significance of Effect

**2.11.106** The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period C on this LLCA can be summarised as follows:

- The introduction of the construction access route would create a subdivision to this LLCA, through a combination of location and alignment;
- Hedge planting with occasional tree planting along the road corridor boundary would reflect the typical characteristics of similar roads within the local area of An Camas Mòr in the longer term;
- The large majority of the LLCA would remain unaffected; and
- The sensitivity of the LLCA is considered to be high.

**2.11.107** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period C would have a **moderate adverse effect** on the 'Flood Plain Agricultural Land' LLCA, which would be permanent, as there would be a considerable change to the character of the LLCA, although its key landscape characteristics of low lying, open agricultural fields would be retained.

### Wider Landscape Setting

#### 'Speyside' LCA

#### Changes to the Landscape Resource

**2.11.108** The following changes would be additional to those identified in Assessment Periods A and B.

**2.11.109** An Camas Mòr would introduce an additional area of new built development into the LCA, on the east side of the River Spey, as an extension of that previously introduced in Assessment Periods A and B. Currently, the majority of the existing settlements associated with the River Spey corridor are located on the west side of the river. The extent of this built development would remain very limited in relation to the overall scale and extent of the LCA. The pattern and mix of open spaces, woodlands, pasture and settlement throughout the LCA would not be substantially altered, and the general wooded character of the strath would not be changed by the introduction of the built development associated with Assessment Period C. The built development of the proposed new community would essentially be located within a surrounding zone of woodland, such that the pattern of open agricultural lands and tree belts of the local area would not be altered. Whilst the introduction of new built development and its associated infrastructure would result in some further urbanisation within the LCA, this would be of a limited nature within the overall context of the LCA, and its predominantly rural character would not be altered.

**2.11.110** Growth of the compensation alder woodland would at this period have developed to a height and density where it would be beginning to contribute positively to the local woodland pattern and character of the area.

**2.11.111** The introduction of the built development into the 'Elevated Woodland' LLCA within this LCA in Assessment Period C would result in a moderate adverse, and therefore significant, effect, but this would be a localised effect within the LCA and other associated effects to other LLCAs would not be of a significant nature, such that these would have no significant effect on the overall characteristics of the LCA.

**2.11.112** The introduction of the construction access route would extend beyond the boundaries of the LLCAs identified for the An Camas Mòr site, to a junction with the B970 in the vicinity of the substation. A large majority of the construction preparation works for this section of the route, including road bridge foundations, flood water culverts and associated earthworks have already been undertaken in Assessment Period A. Some additional earthworks would be undertaken to connect the construction access route to these existing works, and a new road bridge over the River Druie would be introduced with an access connection to a new temporary 'T' junction with the B970. This would result in removal of some trees over this length of route and in the vicinity of the junction.

**2.11.113** The site of An Camas Mòr is located within an area categorised as having 'low wildness' as identified in the draft 'Wildness' study carried out for CNPA. The combination of accessibility through the existing road network, associated built development, occurrence of other man-made features and the plantation forests of the local area all contribute to this categorisation. The introduction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period C would continue the humanisation which is a typical characteristic of the 'Speyside' LCA, and would reinforce the categorisation of the An Camas Mòr area as being in an area of 'low wildness'.

**2.11.114** In overall terms, given the relatively limited scale of introduction of new built development and its associated infrastructure into this LCA, where such built development is currently part of the character of the LCA, it is considered that the magnitude of change resulting from the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period C to this LCA would be **low**, as this would be considered as a noticeable change to the character of the LCA, although the predominantly rural and wooded character of the LCA would be retained.

## Nature and Significance of Effect

**2.11.115** The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period C on this LCA can be summarised as follows:

- Further new built development would be introduced to the LCA, although built development is a component of the key characteristics of the LCA;
- The overall extent of new built development would be relatively limited within the overall LCA, and the general rural and wooded character of the LCA would be retained;
- The key landscape characteristics of the strath in terms of its landform, woodland pattern and open agricultural land use would be retained;
- New wet alder woodland would be established within a small area of the LCA as compensation habitat, and would be of sufficient growth to contribute positively to the local woodland character and pattern of the area;
- Moderate adverse impacts would occur to the 'Elevated Woodland' and 'Flood Plain Agricultural Land' LLCAs within this LCA but these would not be of such a scale and extent to impact on the overall characteristics of the LCA;
- The low – medium classification of the LCA in terms of 'wildness' would not be altered by the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period C;
- The sensitivity of the LCA is considered to be medium; and
- The character of the LCA would be slightly altered, but on a scale and extent which would not change the essential characteristics of the LCA.

**2.11.116** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period C would have a **slight adverse effect** on the 'Speyside' LCA, as the proposed new community would introduce a new built component to the landscape but the intrinsic characteristics of the LCA would be retained.

## Other LCAs of the Wider Landscape Setting

### Changes to the Landscape Resource

**2.11.117** The following changes would be additional to those identified in Assessment Periods A and B.

**2.11.118** An Camas Mòr and its associated features would not be located within any of the LCAs which contribute to the wider landscape setting of the An Camas Mòr site, and therefore there would be no direct physical changes to the key characteristics of these LCAs. The introduction of the proposed new community during Assessment Period C would not result in any changes to the overall landscape pattern within the 'Speyside' LCA which would affect the landscape characteristics of neighbouring LCAs, nor affect the current inter-relationship between the LCAs within the wider setting of An Camas Mòr. The LCAs of the wider setting are of a considerable scale and geographic extent in relation to the introduction of the proposed new

community during Assessment Period C, and whilst limited views of the proposed new community may be available from elevated locations within some of the LCAs, these would mostly be at distances in excess of 5 km and it is considered unlikely that these would change the key characteristics of the LCAs.

**2.11.119** Some natural succession from heathland to mixed native woodland would be evident in the lower reaches of the Lairig Ghru within the 'Central Massif' LCA related to the compensation habitat proposed, but tree growth would be limited in height and density and in terms of the overall LCA, there would be no change to the key characteristics of the 'Central Massif' LCA.

**2.11.120** Changes to heathland would be evident on Ord Ban within the 'Badenoch' LCA related to the compensation habitat proposed but in terms of the overall LCA, there would be no change to the key characteristics of the 'Badenoch' LCA.

**2.11.121** It is not considered that the introduction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period C would result in any changes to the categorisation of 'wildness' throughout the LCAs of the wider landscape setting to An Camas Mòr, through a reduction in their relative level of 'wildness', and that the overall pattern of 'wildness' categories throughout the wider landscape setting would be retained.

**2.11.122** Given that the location of An Camas Mòr would be positioned outwith the LCAs of the wider landscape setting of An Camas Mòr, it is considered that the magnitude of change resulting from the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period C to the LCAs of the wider landscape setting would be **negligible**, as there may be discernable changes to landscape characteristics outwith the LCAs concerned but at distances in excess of 5 km.

## Nature and Significance of Effect

**2.11.123** The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period C on the LCAs of the wider landscape setting can be summarised as follows:

- An Camas Mòr would not be located within these LCAs;
- There would be no physical changes to the characteristics of these LCAs;
- There would be no alteration to the key characteristics of the 'Central Massif' LCA resulting from the proposed compensation habitat;
- There would be no alteration to the key characteristics of the 'Badenoch' LCA resulting from the proposed compensation habitat;
- There would be no alteration to the classification and pattern of 'wildness' throughout these LCAs; and
- The sensitivity of these LCAs is high – medium.

**2.11.124** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period C would have **no effect** on the LCAs of the wider landscape setting of the site of An Camas Mòr, as any changes which might occur would be of a negligible nature.

## The Cairngorms National Park

### Changes to the Landscape Resource

**2.11.125** The various changes have been described within the preceding sections of this assessment  
**Nature and Significance of Effect**

**2.11.126** The likely impact of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period C on the landscape of the Cairngorms National Park can be summarised as follows:

- Whilst there would be a moderate adverse effect on the 'Elevated Woodlands' and 'Flood Plain Agricultural Land' LLCAs, these effects would be very localised in relation to the overall extent of the National Park and in overall terms, the distinctive landscapes throughout not just the wider setting of An Camas Mòr but the National Park as a whole would not be materially affected;
- The combination, interaction and juxtaposition of the range of landscape types and components throughout the Park and which make it special would not be significantly altered by the introduction of An Camas Mòr;
- An Camas Mòr would not be located within the central mountain area of the Park, and would therefore not affect the most striking and dominant landscape feature of the Park;
- The specific site of An Camas Mòr does not make a significant contribution to the landscape of the National Park or its distinctive landscapes;
- Whilst the introduction of the proposed new community would result in some loss of trees within the Strathspey pine forests, this loss would be minimal within the context of the overall extent of the forest, and agreed woodland management for the Rothiemurchus area aims to retain the overall pattern and extent of woodlands throughout the area;
- An Camas Mòr represents the introduction of a planned community within the Park, continuing a tradition and legacy of planned settlements and built development which extends throughout the lower areas of the Park;
- Given the location of An Camas Mòr, the sense of 'wildness' within the montane area of the National Park would not be affected, the introduction of An Camas Mòr would reinforce the categorisation of the area around An Camas Mòr as being of 'low wildness', and the overall pattern of 'wildness' categories throughout the National Park would be retained; and
- The sensitivity of the National Park is considered to be high.

**2.11.127** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period C would have a **slight adverse effect** on the landscape of the Cairngorms National Park.

### Assessment Period D

#### Local Landscape Setting

#### 'Elevated Woodlands' LLCA

#### Changes to the Landscape Resource

**2.11.128** The following changes would be additional to those identified in Assessment Periods A, B and C.

**2.11.129** Further built development and associated infrastructure would be introduced as an extension to that included within Assessment Periods A, B and C, extending in a northerly and westerly direction into the LLCA. This would establish further built development of different densities around the central High Street, and which would cover most of the area of the LLCA. On the western boundary of the LLCA, built development at the western end of the High Street up to 15 m in height would extend through the woodland edge to the boundary of the LLCA.

**2.11.130** Considerable areas of existing woodland would be removed to introduce the buildings and roads associated with this Assessment Period, and although a structure of existing and new trees associated with the open space, street, garden and plot boundary pattern would be incorporated into the overall layout, there would be an overall substantial reduction in the general extent of woodland cover throughout the LLCA. Whilst new tree planting undertaken within Assessment Period A would have had 19 years of growth, it would only be approximately 10m in height, and consequently its contribution within the higher and medium density zones would be relatively limited. Within the lower density zone, the combination of existing retained and newly planted trees would be making a considerable contribution to the general pattern and extent of tree cover within these areas of the proposed new community, strongly contributing to the woodland setting and character of the proposed new community.

**2.11.131** The construction access route introduced in Assessment Period C would be surfaced to form the new district distributor road accessing the site, with an associated new roundabout with lighting introduced in the southern section of the LLCA.

#### Nature and Significance of Effect

**2.11.132** The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period D on this LLCA can be summarised as follows:

- The overall wooded character of the LLCA would be altered through the scale, extent and density of built development introduced, such that woodland would no longer be the dominant characteristic of the LLCA, although the LLCA would retain a wooded periphery and trees would be strong component of the low density development zone;
- New built development would be introduced to the LLCA, and which would become a key characteristic of the LLCA, introducing urbanisation into a LLCA which is strongly rural in character;

- The overall pattern and extent of woodland tree cover within the LLCA would be substantially altered through removal of trees for the introduction of buildings and roads;
- New tree planting associated with Assessment Period A, whilst having nearly 20 years of growth, would not be of such a scale and extent to reduce the overall impact of the built development within the higher and medium density zones on the LLCA;
- The combination of retained existing trees and newly planted trees within the lower density zones would, at the end of Assessment Period D, be contributing positively to the woodland setting and character of these areas;
- Within the new community, existing retained and new tree planting in terms of street trees, open space trees and belts which connect through the overall development would be making a positive contribution to the landscape and townscape character of the new community, providing a strong impression at a human scale of a new community within a woodland setting;
- The key landform characteristic of the elevated plateau of the LLCA would be retained;
- The sensitivity of the LLCA is considered to be medium; and
- The character of the LLCA would be altered on a scale and extent which would require a redefinition of its essential characteristics.

**2.11.133** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period D would have a **substantial adverse effect** on the 'Elevated Woodlands' LLCA, which would be permanent, as the introduction of An Camas Mòr would become a key characteristic of the LLCA and would result in a change to the intrinsic characteristics of the LLCA.

### 'Heathland / Pasture' LLCA

#### Changes to the Landscape Resource

- 2.11.134** The following changes would be additional to those identified in Assessment Periods A, B and C.
- 2.11.135** There would be no works undertaken within this LLCA as part of the Assessment Period D works. Further new built development would be introduced on the west side of the B970 and would be visible from within the LLCA, although views out from the LLCA are not an important characteristic of the LLCA. The pattern of open space and tree belts along the western side of the B970 would be well established, and by the end of Assessment Period D, existing retained trees along the eastern side of the An Camas Mòr site would provide effective screening of this built development.
- 2.11.136** Given that there would be no works undertaken within this LLCA, it is considered that the magnitude of change resulting from the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period D to this LLCA would be **negligible**, as this would be considered as no change to the character of the LLCA.

### Nature and Significance of Effect

- 2.11.137** The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period D on this LLCA can be summarised as follows:
- There would be no physical changes to the character of this LLCA;
  - New built development would be introduced close to the western boundary of this LLCA, although views from within this LLCA are not a key characteristic of this LLCA. Existing retained planting along the eastern boundary of An Camas Mòr would provide an effective screen of this development; and
  - The sensitivity of the LLCA is considered to be high.
- 2.11.138** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period D would have **no effect** on the 'Heathland / pasture' LLCA, as there would only be a negligible or no change to the characteristics of the LLCA.

### Cultivated Fields' LLCA

#### Changes to the Landscape Resource

- 2.11.139** The following changes would be additional to those identified in Assessment Periods A, B and C.
- 2.11.140** A pedestrian / cycleway route would be introduced along part of the eastern boundary of the LLCA, partly within the LLCA and partly within the adjacent 'Elevated Woodlands' LLCA, although this would not alter the key characteristics of the LLCA.
- 2.11.141** Built development associated with the western end of the High Street would be introduced along the eastern boundary of the LLCA, but would not incur into the LLCA. This built development would alter the nature of the existing woodland containment to the eastern boundary to this LLCA. Several areas of open ground would be introduced along this boundary which would make connections to other areas of open space within the An Camas Mòr development.
- 2.11.142** A further playing field reservation comprising grass playing pitches would be introduced into the LLCA to the south of the reservation introduced in Assessment Period C. There would be a further loss of existing agricultural land over the area concerned, although the existing open character of the LLCA would be retained. Agricultural use would continue up to the edge of the pitches.
- 2.11.143** Given the location, scale and nature of the works undertaken within and adjacent to this LLCA, it is considered that the magnitude of change resulting from the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period D would be **low**, as the introduction of the playing field allocation and the built development at the western end of the High Street would be a noticeable change to the character of the LLCA.

## Nature and Significance of Effect

**2.11.144** The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period D on this LLCA can be summarised as follows:

- There would be very limited physical changes to the character of this LLCA;
- The playing field allocation is part of a longer term plan by others to establish a riverside parkland corridor throughout this LLCA, which is likely to change the character of this area;
- The introduction of built development on the eastern boundary to the LLCA would change the nature of the woodland containment to the LLCA, although this would be over a relatively limited section of the LLCA boundary and the overall sense of containment to the LLCA by woodland and new buildings would be retained;
- There would be a land use change within the core of the LLCA from agricultural land to recreational use; and
- The sensitivity of the LLCA is considered to be high.

**2.11.145** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period D would have a **slight adverse effect** on the 'Cultivated Fields' LLCA, which would be permanent, as whilst there would be some change to the LLCA, its intrinsic characteristics would be retained.

## 'Flood Plain Agricultural Land' LLCA

### Changes to the Landscape Resource

**2.11.146** The following changes would be additional to those identified in Assessment Periods A, B and C.

**2.11.147** The construction access road would be surfaced to form the district distributor road. The road alignment and its associated treatments of earthworks, seeding of verges and embankments, fencing and associated hedge and occasional tree planting would have already been introduced in Assessment Period C.

**2.11.148** Whilst there would be limited works undertaken within this LLCA, given the nature and location of these, it is considered that the magnitude of change resulting from the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period D to this LLCA would be **medium**, as the introduction of the district distributor route and pedestrian / cycleway route would be a considerable change to the character of the LLCA.

## Nature and Significance of Effect

**2.11.149** The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period D on this LLCA can be summarised as follows:

- The introduction of the district distributor route and pedestrian / cycleway routes would create a subdivision to this LLCA, through a combination of location and alignment;
- Hedge planting with occasional tree planting along the road corridor boundary would reflect the typical characteristics of similar roads within the local area of An Camas Mòr in the longer term;
- The large majority of the LLCA would remain unaffected; and
- The sensitivity of the LLCA is considered to be high.

**2.11.150** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period D would have a **moderate adverse effect** on the 'Flood Plain Agricultural Land' LLCA, which would be permanent, as there would be a considerable change to the character of the LLCA, although its key landscape characteristics of low lying, open agricultural fields would be retained.

## Wider Landscape Setting

### 'Speyside' LCA

### Changes to the Landscape Resource

**2.11.151** The following changes would be additional to those identified in Assessment Periods A, B and C.

**2.11.152** An Camas Mòr would introduce a considerable additional area of new built development into the LCA, on the east side of the River Spey, as an extension of that previously introduced in Assessment Periods A, B and C. Currently, the majority of the existing settlements associated with the River Spey corridor are located on the west side of the river. The extent of this built development would remain limited in relation to the overall scale and extent of the LCA. The pattern and mix of open spaces, woodlands, pasture and settlement throughout the LCA would not be substantially altered, and the general wooded character of the strath would not be changed by the introduction of the built development. The built development of the proposed new community would essentially be located within a surrounding zone of woodland, such that the pattern of open agricultural lands and tree belts of the local area would not be altered. Tree planting associated with all Assessment Periods of the proposed new community would assist in reducing the overall scale and density of development, particularly within the medium and low density zones, although the pattern of built development would still be the more dominant feature. Whilst the introduction of new built development and its associated infrastructure would result in some further urbanisation within the LCA, this would be of a limited nature within the overall context of the LCA, and the predominantly rural character of the LCA would not be altered.

**2.11.153** Growth of the compensation alder woodland would at this period be well established to a height and density where it would be contributing positively to the local woodland pattern and character of the area.

**2.11.154** The introduction of the built development into the 'Elevated Woodland' LLCA within this LCA in Assessment Period D would result in a substantial adverse, and therefore significant, effect

within the LCA. The introduction of the district distributor road and associated pedestrian / cycleway route and their associated works into the 'Flood Plain Agricultural Land' LLCAs within this LCA would result in a moderate adverse, and therefore significant, effect within the LCA. These effects would, however, be of a localised and limited nature within the LCA and other associated effects to other LLCAs would not be of a significant nature, such that these would have no significant effect on the overall characteristics of the LCA.

**2.11.155** A new roundabout would be introduced at the junction of the district distributor road with the B970, which would result in some removal of existing trees in this area, although this would be very limited.

**2.11.156** The site of An Camas Mòr is located within an area categorised as having 'low wildness' as identified in the draft 'Wildness' study carried out for CNPA. The combination of accessibility through the existing road network, associated built development, occurrence of other man-made features and the plantation forests of the local area all contribute to this categorisation. The introduction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period D would continue the humanisation which is a typical characteristic of the 'Speyside' LCA, and would reinforce the categorisation of the An Camas Mòr area as being in an area of 'low wildness'.

**2.11.157** In overall terms, given the relatively limited scale of introduction of new built development and its associated infrastructure in relation to the overall extent of this LCA, where such built development is currently part of the character of the LCA, it is considered that the magnitude of change resulting from the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period D to this LCA would be **low**, as this would be considered as a noticeable change to the character of the LCA, although the predominantly rural and wooded character of the LCA would be retained. However, it is considered that at the junction of the district distributor road and the B970, a medium change to the local character would occur, as a result of considerable changes to a range of landscape components within a confined location.

### Nature and Significance of Effect

**2.11.158** The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period D on this LCA can be summarised as follows:

- New built development would be introduced to the LCA, although built development is a component of the key characteristics of the LCA;
- The overall extent of new built development would be relatively limited within the overall LCA, and the general rural and wooded character of the LCA would be retained;
- The key landscape characteristics of the strath in terms of its landform, woodland pattern and open agricultural land use would be retained;
- New wet alder woodland would be well established within a small area of the LCA as compensation habitat, and would be of sufficient growth to contribute positively to the local woodland pattern and character of the area;
- Substantial and moderate adverse effects would occur to several LLCAs within this LCA but these would not be of such a scale and extent to impact on the overall characteristics of the LCA;

- The low – medium classification of the LCA in terms of 'wildness' would not be altered by the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period D;
- The sensitivity of the LCA is considered to be medium; and
- The character of the LCA would be slightly altered, but on a scale and extent which would not change the essential characteristics of the LCA.

**2.11.159** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period D would have a **slight adverse effect** on the 'Speyside' LCA, as An Camas Mòr would introduce a new built component to the landscape but the intrinsic characteristics of the LCA would be retained.

### Other LCAs of the Wider Landscape Setting

#### Changes to the Landscape Resource

**2.11.160** The following changes would be additional to those identified in Assessment Periods A, B and C.

**2.11.161** An Camas Mòr and its associated features would not be located within any of the LCAs which contribute to the wider landscape setting of the An Camas Mòr site, and therefore there would be no direct physical changes to the key characteristics of these LCAs. The introduction of An Camas Mòr during Assessment Period C would not result in any changes to the overall landscape pattern within the 'Speyside' LCA which would affect the landscape characteristics of neighbouring LCAs, nor affect the current inter-relationship between the LCAs within the wider setting of An Camas Mòr. The LCAs of the wider setting are of a considerable scale and geographic extent in relation to the introduction of An Camas Mòr during Assessment Period C, and whilst limited views of An Camas Mòr may be available from elevated locations within some of the LCAs, these would mostly be at distances in excess of 5 km and it is considered unlikely that these would change the key characteristics of the LCAs.

**2.11.162** Some natural succession from heathland to mixed native woodland would be evident in the lower reaches of the Lairig Ghru within the 'Central Massif' LCA related to the compensation habitat proposed, and although tree growth would be limited, some minor local change to the landscape character of the area concerned would have occurred in terms of beginning to form a transition from the more wooded lower slope areas through open montane scrub woodland to the open moorland hillsides above. However, the scale of this change in the context of the overall LCA would be very limited, and in terms of the overall LCA, there would be no change to the key characteristics of the 'Central Massif' LCA.

**2.11.163** Changes to heathland would be evident on Ord Ban within the 'Badenoch' LCA related to the compensation habitat proposed but in terms of the overall LCA, there would be no change to the key characteristics of the 'Badenoch' LCA.

**2.11.164** It is not considered that the introduction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period D would result in any changes to the categorisation of 'wildness' throughout the LCAs of the wider landscape setting to An Camas Mòr, through a reduction in their relative level of 'wildness', and that the overall pattern of 'wildness' categories throughout the wider landscape setting would be retained.

**2.11.165** Given that the location of An Camas Mòr would be positioned outwith the LCAs of the wider landscape setting of An Camas Mòr, it is considered that the magnitude of change resulting from the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period D to the LCAs of the wider landscape setting would be **negligible**, as there may be discernable changes to landscape characteristics outwith the LCAs concerned but at distances in excess of 5 km.

### Nature and Significance of Effect

**2.11.166** The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period D on the LCAs of the wider landscape setting can be summarised as follows:

- An Camas Mòr would not be located within these LCAs;
- There would be no physical changes to the characteristics of these LCAs as a result of the proposed development;
- There would be no alteration to the key characteristics of the 'Central Massif' LCA resulting from the proposed compensation habitat;
- There would be no alteration to the key characteristics of the 'Badenoch' LCA resulting from the proposed compensation habitat;
- There would be no alteration to the classification and pattern of 'wildness' throughout these LCAs; and
- The sensitivity of these LCAs is high – medium.

**2.11.167** Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period D would have **no effect** on the LCAs of the wider landscape setting of the site of An Camas Mòr, as any changes which might occur would be of a negligible nature.

### The Cairngorms National Park

#### Changes to the Landscape Resource

**2.11.168** The various changes have been described within the preceding sections of this assessment.

### Nature and Significance of Effect

**2.11.169** The likely effect of the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period D on the landscape of the Cairngorms National Park can be summarised as follows:

- Whilst there would be a substantial adverse effect on the 'Elevated Woodlands' LLCA and a moderate adverse effect on the 'Flood Plain Agricultural Land' LLCA, these effects would be very localised in relation to the overall extent of the National Park and in overall terms, the distinctive landscapes throughout not just the wider setting of An Camas Mòr but the National Park as a whole would not be materially affected;

- The combination, interaction and juxtaposition of the range of landscape types and components throughout the Park and which make it special would not be significantly altered by the introduction of An Camas Mòr;
- An Camas Mòr would not be located within the central mountain area of the Park, and would therefore not affect the most striking and dominant landscape feature of the Park;
- The specific site of An Camas Mòr does not make a significant contribution to the landscape of the National Park or its distinctive landscapes;
- Whilst the introduction of the proposed new community would result in some loss of trees within the Strathspey pine forests, this loss would be minimal within the context of the overall extent of the forest, and agreed woodland management for the Rothiemurchus area aims to retain the overall pattern and extent of woodlands throughout the area. Additionally, within the lower density zone of An Camas Mòr, the combination of existing retained and newly planted trees would be making a considerable contribution to the general pattern and extent of tree cover within these areas of the proposed new community, strongly contributing to the woodland setting and character of An Camas Mòr;
- An Camas Mòr represents the introduction of a planned community within the Park, continuing a tradition and legacy of planned settlements and built development which extends throughout the lower areas of the Park;
- Given the location of An Camas Mòr, the sense of 'wildness' within the montane area of the National Park would not be affected, the introduction of An Camas Mòr would reinforce the categorisation of the area around An Camas Mòr as being of 'low wildness', and the overall pattern of 'wildness' categories throughout the National Park would be retained; and
- The sensitivity of the National Park is considered to be high. Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the construction of An Camas Mòr following Assessment Period D would have a **slight adverse effect** on the landscape of the Cairngorms National Park.

### Summary of Significance of Effect on the Landscape Resource

**2.11.170** Table 2.2 indicates the levels of effect predicted on the various categories of landscape resource included in the assessment.

**Table 2.2: Summary of Significance of Effects on the Landscape Resource**

Category – Local Landscape Setting	Sensitivity	Effect in Assessment Period A	Effect in Assessment Period B	Effect in Assessment Period C	Effect in Assessment Period D
'Elevated Woodland' LLCA	Medium	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Substantial Adverse

'Heathland / Pasture LLCA	High	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect
'Cultivated Fields' LLCA	High	Slight Adverse	Slight Adverse	Slight Adverse	Slight Adverse
'Flood Plain Agricultural Land' LLCA	High	Slight Adverse	Slight Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse
<b>Category – Wider Landscape Setting</b>	<b>Sensitivity</b>	<b>Effect in Assessment Period A</b>	<b>Effect in Assessment Period B</b>	<b>Effect in Assessment Period C</b>	<b>Effect in Assessment Period D</b>
'Speyside' LCA	Low	Slight Adverse	Slight Adverse	Slight Adverse	Slight Adverse
Other LCAs of Wider Setting	High - Medium	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect
Cairngorm National Park	High	Slight Adverse	Slight Adverse	Slight Adverse	Slight Adverse

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

## Effect on Designated Landscapes

### General

**2.11.171** This section considers the effect of An Camas Mòr on The Cairngorm Mountains National Scenic Area. The effect of An Camas Mòr on the landscape resource of the Cairngorms National Park has been assessed within the previous section. The effect on Gardens and Designed Landscapes is included within the chapter 'Effect on Cultural Heritage'.

### The Cairngorm Mountains NSA

#### Likely Effects

**2.11.172** Table 2.3 below describes the key characteristics and likely effects upon the designated area.

**Table 2.3: Key Characteristics of The Cairngorm Mountains NSA highlighted in 'Scotland's Scenic Heritage' and Likely Effects**

Key Characteristics	Likely Effects
"The granite plateau of the Cairngorm Mountains forms the most extensive area of land above 1,000m anywhere in Britain", although "its height is less immediately apparent than its bulk."	An Camas Mòr would not be located in this area of the NSA, and would therefore not affect this characteristic.
"The high plateau is bleak and bare and it is the immensity of scale, once realised, which impresses."	An Camas Mòr would not be located in this area of the NSA and this characteristic of the plateau would not be affected by its introduction.
Murray, 1962, is quoted "with the vast corries, the massive slopes, the long passes, the wide skies, and the very bareness of the ground, where the elements work with a power not known at lower altitudes, gives to these plateaux their distinctive quality".	An Camas Mòr would not be located in this area of the NSA, and would therefore not affect these characteristics, nor affect the distinctive quality of the plateaux.
"The edge of the plateau, where not etched by corries, is well defined by long smooth steep slopes which from Speyside or Deeside rise in tiers."	An Camas Mòr would not be located in this area of the NSA, and would therefore not affect this characteristic.
"Lower down, deer forest, sheep grazing and forestry assume a greater importance in the appearance of the landscape. It is the forests around the plateau foot which for many people characterise the Cairngorm Mountains; three extensive and differing remnants of the native Caledonian Pine Forest occur at Rothiemurchus and Abernethy, Glen Feshie and Mar."	Only the native pine forest at Rothiemurchus would be likely to be affected by the introduction of An Camas Mòr. Whilst there would be some progressive loss of woodland/forest cover as An Camas Mòr is developed, the overall woodland character of the lower areas of the NSA would be retained. Areas of remnant native pine wood within and around the site of An Camas Mòr would be retained, with only minor tree loss. New woodland planting would be undertaken as part of the peripheral buffer zones to compensate for that which would be removed. Where new buildings would be seen, these would be within a woodland setting, due to the provision of generous buffer areas along the boundary of An Camas Mòr and by the retention and management of existing forests and woodland immediately around the site as part of an agreed long term management plan. The predominance of tree cover around the site of An Camas Mòr would be retained. The general mixed land use character of the lower areas of the NSA would be retained around the site of An Camas Mòr, as part of the diverse land use management of the Rothiemurchus Estate. An Camas Mòr would have a compact footprint in relation to other settlements within Strathspey, and consequently its impact in relation to loss of tree cover would be limited.
"In Rothiemurchus, the pines on the upper forest slopes give way to a mixture of birch and pine, and then to the rich policy woodlands of Strathspey. The forests are deeply carpeted with heather, blueberry and other flora, and the woods are interspersed with lochans of varying character, and	Areas of existing pine and birch, predominantly around the boundary of the site, would be retained as part of the development of An Camas Mòr, along with the larch tree belts on the nearby escarpments. The predominantly wooded character of the area would be retained,

<p>views culminating in the peaty waters of the Spey itself.”</p>	<p>and any new tree planting associated with An Camas Mòr would be of pine, birch and other native species. There would be some loss of ground flora species where buildings, roads and gardens are introduced, but this would be of a small scale in relation to the extent of the wider Rothiemurchus area. When seen from the surrounding area, the forest, woodland and heathland character of the site would generally be retained, due to the provision of generous buffer areas along the boundary of An Camas Mòr and by the retention and management of existing forests and woodland immediately around the site as part of an agreed long term management plan. No lochans would be affected by the introduction of An Camas Mòr. The River Spey is not particularly visible from within the site of An Camas Mòr, due to the intervening river terrace and its associated riverside tree belts, which would not be affected by An Camas Mòr.</p>
<p>“Glen Feshie is wilder and sterner, the pines mature and solitary, interspersed with juniper. The river dominates the forest, a great braided mountain stream with shingle beds cast over an uneven flood plain, almost continental in scale.”</p>	<p>An Camas Mòr would not be located within Glen Feshie and therefore would not affect this characteristic of the NSA.</p>
<p>“Mar Forest is different again. Higher, and therefore less rich than Rothiemurchus in its flora, it graduates from birch, pine and fir to massive pines alone.....Like Glen Feshie, the rivers are important here but not for their scale or grandeur. They are noisy burns dashing over granite boulders washed brightly pink by their clear waters, a lively element in the landscape.”</p>	<p>An Camas Mòr would not be located within Mar Forest and therefore would not affect this characteristic of the NSA.</p>
<p>“These woodland flanks of the Cairngorm plateau form a setting of rare beauty for the mountain massif, and are in turn enhanced by the mountain backdrop.”</p>	<p>The overall scale and extent of the woodland flanks to the mountains would not be significantly altered by the introduction of An Camas Mòr, and woodland would remain the predominant character of the area around An Camas Mòr. An Camas Mòr would be located on low ground close to the River Spey, and the rising wooded flanks of the Cairngorms would not be affected by the introduction of An Camas Mòr. An Camas Mòr would have a compact footprint in relation to other settlements within Strathspey, and consequently its effect in relation to loss of tree cover would be limited. Consequently, the introduction of An Camas Mòr would not alter the fundamental relationship between the woodland landscape and the mountain backdrop, and the characteristic woodland setting to the mountains would essentially be retained.</p>

**Predicted Effect on the Objectives and Integrity of The Cairngorm Mountains NSA**

**2.11.173** Much of the citation for The Cairngorm Mountains NSA refers to the plateaux where the introduction of An Camas Mòr would have no physical effects. Where references are made to the woodland setting and character of the Rothiemurchus area, it is considered that the introduction of An Camas Mòr would not alter the fundamental characteristics of this area, as the predominant woodland character of the area around the site of An Camas Mòr would be retained, in accordance with the agreed Rothiemurchus Estate Forest Plan, and the area would continue to provide a woodland setting to the mountain plateaux beyond. The site of An Camas Mòr lies at the north- west corner of the NSA, and much of the NSA is located outwith the extent of the wider landscape setting to An Camas Mòr established as part of the landscape character assessment process. Consequently, it is considered that the key characteristics of the NSA would remain essentially intact following the introduction of An Camas Mòr.

**2.11.174** On account of the characteristics described above, the magnitude of effects upon the integrity of The Cairngorm Mountains NSA by An Camas Mòr is judged to be **low**.

**2.11.175** On account of the characteristics described above, the significance of effects upon the underlying character and integrity of The Cairngorm Mountains NSA by An Camas Mòr is judged to be **slight adverse**, and not significant, and that the underlying character and integrity of the NSA would remain essentially unaltered.

**2.12 Scope for and Mitigation Measures**

**2.12.1** Volume 1, Chapter 5 has described the comprehensive design development process which has accompanied the preparation of the layout of the proposed new community at An Camas Mòr. This process has aimed to prevent, reduce and where possible offset any significant adverse effects on the landscape resource where possible, through consideration of the general layout, built form and character, retention of existing trees and areas of woodland, open space and internal tree block provision and treatment of boundaries.

**2.12.2** Significant adverse effects have been identified on the ‘Elevated Woodlands’ and ‘Flood Plain Agricultural Land’ LLCAs as part of the assessment process, and therefore potential mitigation measures require to be considered for these areas.

**2.12.3** The ‘Elevated Woodlands’ LLCA covers the site of the proposed new community and therefore there would inevitably be considerable changes to, and associated effects on, its landscape character as a result of the introduction of the proposed new community. The scale, extent and density of built development which would be introduced would result in woodland no longer forming the dominant characteristic of the LLCA, with a consequent effect on its existing rural character. Such effects are considered unavoidable.

**2.12.4** However, measures have been incorporated into the layout and design of the new community to be economic with the use of land, retain as much existing tree cover as possible, particularly around the periphery of the site, and to incorporate new tree planting, with the objective of creating a woodland setting for the proposed new community. By 2027, it is considered that this 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 the overall character of the LLCA, 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. Within

the new community though, existing retained and new tree planting in terms of street trees, open space trees and belts which connect through the overall development would be making a positive contribution to the landscape and townscape character of the new community, providing a strong impression at a human scale of a new community within a woodland setting.

- 2.12.5** Beyond 2027, further tree growth would increase and reinforce the woodland setting character of the new community, such that the level of effect on the LLCA would gradually reduce over time.
- 2.12.6** 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 on the 'Elevated Woodlands' LLCA which have been identified.
- 2.12.7** The introduction of the district distributor road through the 'Flood Plain Agricultural Land' LLCA would inevitably fragment the existing field pattern, irrespective of its particular alignment. This particular effect is considered unavoidable, given the requirement to connect the new community to the B970 at some point in the vicinity of Inverdrue. Field patterns would be modified to relate to the distributor road alignment and avoid the creation of awkward shaped small-scale fields resulting. The vertical alignment of the district distributor road has been designed to follow the existing ground profile as closely as possible, with the road being no more than 300mm above the existing ground level, except where it crosses the escarpment. This would assist in achieving a gradual and smooth transition between the road level and the existing field levels. 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 on the 'Flood Plain Agricultural Land' LLCA which have been identified.

## 2.13 Significance of Residual Effects

- 2.13.1** The residual effects of the proposed new community are those outlined in 2.2 above.

## 2.14 Cumulative Effect

- 2.14.1** The Badenoch & 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.

## 2.15 Summary

### Local Landscape Setting

- 2.15.1** Given the proposal to introduce a new community into an area with a strong rural character, where no such scale of built development currently exists, even given the design responses associated with the proposed layout, there would inevitably be considerable changes to the landscape character of the local area, and associated adverse effects. The 'Elevated Woodlands' LLCA covers the site of An Camas Mòr, and this LLCA would be the most affected by the introduction of the proposed new community, with considerable new buildings and associated roads introduced and areas of the existing woodland cover considerably reduced. The introduction of An Camas Mòr would result in the character of this LLCA changing from an

elevated woodland plateau to a new built community within a woodland setting, where woodland was no longer the dominant characteristic, resulting in a substantial adverse, and therefore significant, effect on this LLCA. Equally, within the adjacent 'Flood Plain Agricultural Land' LLCA, there would be moderate adverse, and therefore significant, effect resulting from the proposed district distributor road, although the effect is more limited in extent compared to the 'Elevated Woodlands' LLCA. Consequently, the introduction of An Camas Mòr would result in significant adverse effects on the local landscape character.

- 2.15.2** It is recognised that the changes and significant effects on local landscape character areas would be occurring within a landscape where woodlands, plantations and tree belts generally predominate. This tree cover plays a major role in contributing to the creation of a woodland setting for the proposed new community, both within and around the site, and is subject to a Forest Plan established and undertaken by Rothiemurchus Estate, 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, in association with the measures to retain existing trees and woodland 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

- 2.15.3** 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.