

Wider Countryside



Chapter No:

12

65 - Scottish Natural Heritage [Written Submissions]

BACKGROUND

1. The **objector** considered that Policy 2: Countryside (see Appendix 1 to this report) should include a separate reference to wider countryside/wider environmental areas which support none of the sensitivities identified in its Box 1. The wording should set out clearly the criteria against which any proposed development in these areas would be assessed, and this appeared to be the criteria included in Policy G2 of the structure plan.

2. In addition, the proposed title and the terminology used to describe the different sensitivities of categories of land should be amended to reflect the changes to the policy. Accordingly, the hierarchy of these areas should be amended to refer to four categories: The Wider Environment, and the three existing sensitivity categories. Also, the text used in paragraph 7.11 (see Appendix 1 to this report) which described areas with no identified sensitivities should be reworded to distinguish between areas of wider countryside/wider environment that did not support any of the sensitivities shown in Box 1, and other areas that did.

3. In response, the **council** referred to Policy 2, paragraph 1 (to be altered to Policy 1: Development), as this stated that developments would be assessed for their effects on any relevant interests. This therefore covered situations where there was either no sensitivity, as listed in Box 1, or where there were one or more Low Sensitivity features. The Background Maps indicated whether or not there was any specific sensitivity in any particular Low Sensitivity location.

4. The council considered that the use of the terms “Wider Environment”, “Sensitivity 1”, “Sensitivity 2” or “Sensitivity 3” did not add any clarity and would be meaningless to the community. However, it referred to its proposed modification to the titles used in Box 1 (see my further amendments in paragraph 14 of Chapter 6), and to the sub-division of category 1 of Policy 2 (now Policy 1 – see paragraph 23 of Chapter 8).

5. On the basis of the amendments to the plan proposed by the council and already described in previous chapters, the objector withdrew the objection.

CONCLUSIONS

6. It seems to me that this objection was largely covered in Chapter 5. As a result, with the amendments made to Policy 2, now Policy 1A (Chapter 5, as further amended by Chapter 8), in effect there is already an additional category of “No Local Designation” and I agree with the

council that the categories – particularly as now amended to “Areas of Low Sensitivity (including Locally and Regionally Important Natural and Cultural Features)”, etc are more immediately identifiable than merely Sensitivity 1, etc. These matters have already been discussed fully, and, as the objector is evidently satisfied by the council’s proposed modifications, Chapters 5, 6 and 8 should be referred to for the reasons for the changes already made.

RECOMMENDATION

7. Accordingly, I recommend no change to the deposit draft plan in relation to this objection, other than those changes already proposed in previous chapters.