# *Policy Criteria*

**Chapter No:**

# *13*

## 65 - Scottish Natural Heritage [Written Submissions]

### BACKGROUND

1. The **objector** proposed that the broad criteria against which the impact on features such as semi-natural woodlands would be judged should be specified.

2. The **council**'s response to this was to point out that Policy 2: Countryside (now altered to Policy 1: Development) and other policy references set out in the introduction to the Background Maps document already provided such a policy framework for planning decisions. An assessment based upon the particular circumstances of each application, the consultation process and individual judgement on the effect on such interests was preferable to setting out detailed criteria for each factor in advance.

### CONCLUSIONS

3. It is appropriate at this stage to refer first to paragraphs 46 and 47 of Scottish Planning Policy 1: The Planning System, which sets out how to determine a planning application; and then, in regard to the recommended general reliance on the development plan, paragraph 25 of the same document (see Appendix 3 to this report). In these terms, I accept the council's response to this objection that any planning decision has to be a judgement, taking the development plan (the structure and local plan) and all material considerations (including those cited by the council, and often others as well) into account. I consider that it would be unwise to attempt to set out in a plan all the criteria which could be taken into account, as there will always be other relevant factors; and over-emphasis on one particular set of criteria could produce disparity or imbalance in such a judgement.

4. Despite the number of amendments I have recommended in relation to this plan, I consider that these merely comprise the attempted clarification of what is already the basis of a sound foundation for decision making.

### RECOMMENDATION

5. I therefore recommend no change to the deposit draft of the Wester Ross Local Plan in order to accommodate this objection.