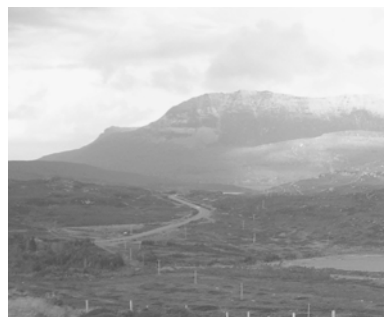


# ***Policy 2: High Sensitivity***



**Chapter No:**

# **14**

65 - Scottish Natural Heritage [Written Submissions]

## **BACKGROUND**

1. Policy 2: Countryside, as it appears in the plan, is set out in Appendix 1 of this report. Recommended amendments in subsequent chapters have not affected the basis of this **objection**, which proposed alterations to Areas of High Sensitivity to ensure the protection of the interests which were the reason for the designation in the first place.

2. The **council** accepted that the wording of the policy did not reflect paragraph 71 of National Planning Policy Guideline 14: Natural Heritage, which set out how local plan policies should provide for measures to ensure the protection and enhancement of the natural heritage (see Appendix 3 to this report). It therefore proposed a further amendment to the policy so that it would read as follows:

### **Policy 1: Development**

When making decisions on development proposals, we will take account of the level of sensitivity of and the effect on the natural and cultural heritage (see Box 1 and Background Maps) and compatibility with structure plan Policy G2: Design for Sustainability.

1. In areas of **low** sensitivity, ... etc.
2. In areas of **medium** sensitivity, ... etc
3. In areas of **high** sensitivity (including Internationally Important Natural and Cultural Features), we will only allow development if it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site. Proposals that would adversely affect the relevant interest for which the site is designated, will only be allowed if there is no alternative solution and there are imperative reasons for overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. Where a priority habitat or species (as defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive) would be affected, prior consultation with the European Commission is required, unless the development is necessary for public health and safety reasons.

3. On the basis of this amendment, the objector withdrew the objection.

**CONCLUSIONS**

4. It seems to me to be sensible to incorporate this change into the plan, as it tightens the policy, follows the advice of National Planning Policy Guideline 14, protects the specific interest for which the site has been designated, while at the same time remedying the concern of the objector in this case.

**RECOMMENDATION**

5. Accordingly, I recommend that the proposed modification, as shown in paragraph 2 above be incorporated into the plan when adopted.