

Kinlochewe



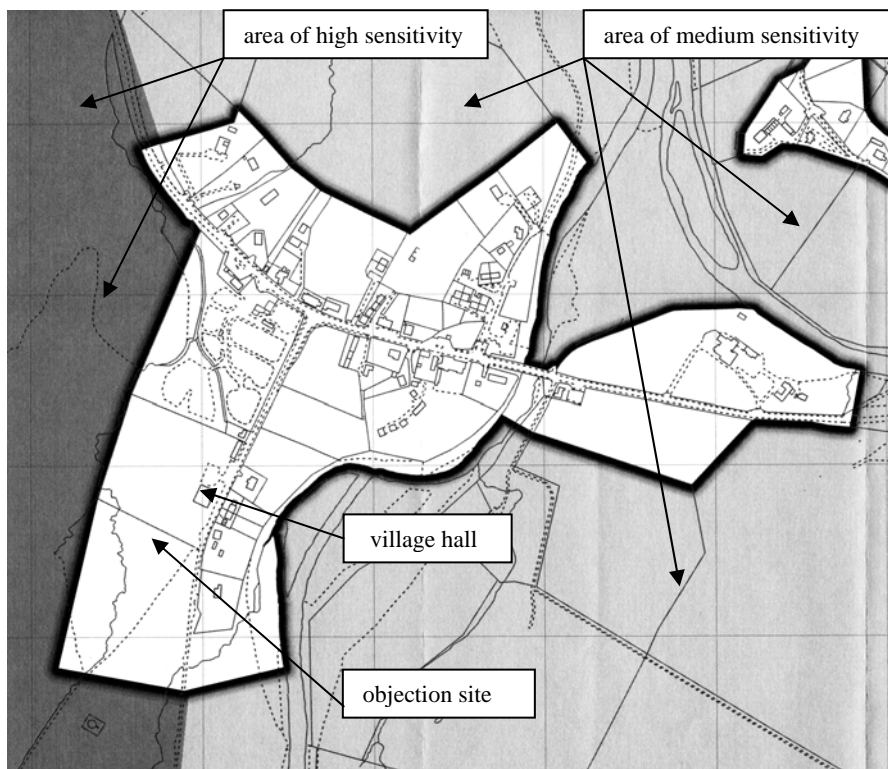
Chapter No:

34

65 - Scottish Natural Heritage [Written Submissions]

BACKGROUND

1. Kinlochewe is a village set on the junction of the A896 Lochcarron road with the A832 Achnasheen/Gairloch road. It is identified in the Proposals Map Kinlochewe Inset as lying at the edge of an area of high sensitivity. To the south, the boundary between this area and that of medium sensitivity follows the A896, in the same way as it follows the A832 to the west of the settlement. The boundary of the Settlement Development Area has been superimposed, and therefore overrides this boundary. This can be seen from the extract (shown below).



2. The **objector** pointed out that the south boundary of the Settlement Development Area included an area of Beinn Eighe Site of Special Scientific Interest/National Nature Reserve/candidate Special Area of Conservation. This high nature conservation interest of the area and the protection afforded to it meant that it was inappropriate for development and should be removed from the Settlement Development Area.

3. The **council** accepted that the Settlement Development Area boundary
Extract from

Proposals Map Kinlochewe Inset
showing Settlement Development Area

included part of the Beinn

redraw the boundary of the Settlement Development Area to exclude part of the area. However, it proposed to continue to include the area bounded by the line of the fence around the village hall.

This area included the site of the proposed auxiliary fire station and a site which had been granted planning permission for four affordable houses.

4. On hearing the council's response, the objector withdrew the objection.

CONCLUSION

5. On reading the above, the question arises as to why planning permission was granted for the four houses, when from the inset map it is apparent that there are a great many potential sites around the village which would be equally suitable and which would lie outwith and further away from the special area of high sensitivity. Similarly, if the fire station is still in the planning stage, then in my opinion, it should be redirected to a more suitable location. It may be that there are a number of reasons for pursuing these proposals but the council has not set them out in its submissions. I consider that merely because sites of such high sensitivity abound within the plan area in comparison with other areas of the country, does not render it sound planning to ignore such constraints.

6. In addition, it seems to me that this village in general, and this objection site in particular, are good examples of why it would be beneficial to the Wester Ross Local Plan to take the colour denoting the level of sensitivity over the relevant parts of the Settlement Development Area, within the Settlement Development Areas boundary, as recommended in Chapter 5 of this report. It may then be seen at a glance which sites lie within the area of high sensitivity and which within the area of medium sensitivity. It is certainly not clear from the present position.

7. In any case, I find this to be a typical example of the apparent lack of regard for the applied levels of sensitivity which correspondingly justifies the requirement for a stronger policy of protection for these areas – a policy such as that set out in Chapter 21.

RECOMMENDATION

8. I recommend therefore that
 - (i) the boundary of the Settlement Development Area be amended at the south-west edge of the village to the area bounded by the line of the fence around the village hall, as proposed by the council's modification;
 - (ii) the proposal for the fire station be reviewed in association with Scottish Natural Heritage in order to determine whether there is not a more suitable location for it outwith the area of high sensitivity; that the situation in relation to the planning permission for four (affordable) houses be monitored, and if they should not proceed for any reason, then the boundary of the Settlement Development Area be reviewed once again (probably in association with the preparation of the following local plan), with the objective of recovering further sections of lost ground designated as being of high sensitivity; and
 - (iii) the vulnerable areas around the edge of the settlement, both within the boundary and outwith the boundary as redrawn in recommendation (i), particularly those identified as lying within the area of high sensitivity, be reviewed in association with Scottish Natural Heritage to determine where Policy 1D (see Chapter 21) requires to be applied.