

Plans for Ballater 'model village'

SIR, - It's time for Aberdeenshire Council, Cairngorms National Park Authority, The Prince's Trust, Scotia Homes, Invercauld Estate and anyone else involved in the hare-brained idea to add a "model village" on to the east side of Ballater to listen to the villagers.

Listen, and then do the "right thing" - build suitable affordable housing. The village does not require more holiday homes.

We accept that the village survives on tourism, and people come to enjoy the delights of the area. But with certain streets and housing estates already sitting with between 60% and 80% holiday occupancy, it's time to reverse that ratio.

There are about 30 houses sitting with For Sale signs. Once the economy perks up, the vast majority, if not all, will become second homes.

Local workers require accommodation to enable them to remain in the community, to continue working in the area and to ensure that there is a community for their children to enjoy.

Surely, the remit of Cairngorms National Park Authority is to preserve and enhance the natural beauty and the communities within its boundaries.

Taking over land once designated for community use and then giving free rein to the developer will kill Ballater.

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