

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 Land:	Birkie Knowe, Ae		
1.2 Area (ha):	0.3967 hectares (0.98 acres)		
1.3 FCS Forest District:	Ae Forest District		
1.4 FCS area land agent:	Stephen Fell		
1.5 Change of land use to affordable housing recommended by FCS yes/no?	Yes		
1.5 Name of housing body:	Loreburn Housing Association		
1.7 Registered Social Landlord yes/no?:	Yes		
1.8 Is this project supported by Communities Scotland yes/no?	Yes – Scheme Agreement received November 2008		
1.9 Additional information:	<p>www.loreburn.co.uk</p> <p>Loreburn Housing Association Limited is a registered Scottish Charity No SC029917</p> <p>Target Housing Association Grant Spend 07/08 - £6.951M (actual spend £8.684M) Target Housing Association Grant Spend 08/09 - £3.985M (expected spend £5.16M)</p> <p>On top of the funding provided by Government, Loreburn has financed millions of pounds of private finance. The total annual average spend by Loreburn for new housing is £12M.</p> <p>This funding has provided the following number of new houses over the last two years.</p> <p>New affordable houses completed 07/08 - 202 New affordable houses completed 08/09 - 104</p>		
1.10 Provide information on the area where the housing is to be built e.g. population of village	<p>There are 87 residential (permanent or holiday) properties registered in the Community Council area of Ae.</p> <p>The estimated population of the village is 195 (from D&G Council Website)</p> <p>Primary school - Minimum capacity 5-10 pupils. Maximum capacity 50 – 75 pupils.</p> <p>Current School Role is 10 (In 07/08 school roll was 18). The eight family houses included in the proposed scheme would go some way to supporting the existence of the primary school.</p> <p>There is a bus service to / from the village which provides transport links to Dumfries and other main settlements.</p>		
1.11 Map of site attached yes/no?	Yes		
1.12 Map of site within context of the surrounding area attached yes/no?	Yes		
1.13 Number of houses/units:	11 houses		
1.14 Rental:	11	1.15 Low cost home ownership:	0
1.16 Additional information:			

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There are 8 family houses and 3 amenity bungalows proposed for the site.

Programme timescale –

Planning Application submission – April 2009
 Planning consent – August 2009
 Acquisition – August 2009
 Start on site – September 2009
 Completion / handover of new houses – June 2010

1.17 Housing mix:

4 No 4 person 2 bedroom family houses
 4 No 5 person 3 bedroom family houses
 3 No 4 person 2 bedroom amenity bungalows
 TOTAL - 11 No Properties

Amenity bungalows are designed specifically for people over 50 years

1.18 Tell us where your project is in the planning/development process:

Meetings (and other methods of consultation) were held with the Community Council, members of the public, local Councillor and local FCS Manager prior to appointment of the design team and development of the layout.

An independent valuation has been received. The gross value of the site is £220,000 however it should be noted that this is prior to the deduction of abnormal costs which are yet to be identified. Ab –normal development costs will be identified following further consideration of the site and the receipt of Site Investigations.

A test layout was developed and comments have been received from the planning officer and roads officer. The layout has now been amended to account for these comments (copy of current layout is enclosed).

A Topographical Survey is now required to confirm site levels/boundaries etc. Following completion of this survey the layout can be further amended as required and submitted for planning – target submission date April 2009

Loreburn's solicitors will be instructed to provide a report on the site titles and prepare an offer to purchase following the decision of the NFLS panel in March 09. The acquisition will be subject to planning approval being received. The target acquisition date is August 2009.

2. ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL NEED *You must provide evidence of local need:*

2.1 Has a local needs survey been carried out?

Yes

2.2 Relevant information:

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The LHS is based on a Housing Needs and Market Study undertaken in 2003. A further study was undertaken in 2006 however did not cover the area Ae or the surrounding area.

Dumfries & Galloway Council are in the process on commissioning a consultancy to undertake an updated Housing Needs and Demands Assessment for the full region. This is expected to complete on Summer 09.

Ae was included as one of the villages in Dumfries and Galloway which were made exempt from Right to Buy in June 2006. This means that some tenants have the Right to Buy their rented housing association house suspended for five years.

The suspension of Right to Buy only applies to tenancies which commenced either on or after September 30, 2002. This will only apply to the existing housing stock in Ae as Loreburn is exempt from Right to Buy.

As a result of Loreburn's exemption, all properties proposed as part of this development will remain for rent under the control and management of Loreburn.

2.3 Has a local housing market survey been undertaken?	Yes
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2.3 Relevant information:

Dumfries & Galloway Small Communities Housing Trust (DGSCHT) was approached by Ae Community Council to carry out a Housing Survey. The report was published in May 2007 and is included as an Appendix to this application.

There was quite a high response rate to the survey at 45%. The survey highlighted the following interesting points in relation to housing in Ae.

- extremely high level of home ownership (94%) with very little rental accommodation
- 56% felt there was a need for more housing in the area
- 84% would not object to new housing however many qualified this by saying they did not want social housing. Concerns in this regard related to fears that the housing would not be offered to local people. There would appear to be support for more housing if it is for people with a local connection. This can be supported through Loreburn's Rural Lettings Initiative (see 4.5).

DGSCHT offered support to the community in liaising with Loreburn Housing Association should they wish to consider a housing development by an RSL.

2.4 Is there a housing strategy relevant to the local area?	Yes
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2.5 Relevant information:

The Local Housing Strategy 2004 – 2009 identifies the 'Mid Nithsdale' area as having a pressure ratio of 4.8 : 1. Pressure ratios are an indicator of the level of demand for properties in a particular area and are based on the number of applicants competing for access to properties that are likely to become available. A pressure ratio of 4.8 : 1 is the 8th most pressurised area in the region.

The LHS is based on a Housing Needs and Market Study undertaken in 2003. A further study was undertaken in 2006 however did not cover the area Ae or the surrounding area.

A list of Pressured Rural Settlements was published with the 2008-2009 Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP). Ae was identified on this list as a Pressured Rural Settlement and a Priority for additional affordable housing.

2.6 Can you provide confirmation of local waiting list numbers?

Loreburn Housing Association does not own any properties in Ae therefore do not hold a waiting list for the village.

DGHP own 3 properties in Ae. 1 No 2 bedroom and 2 No 3 bedroom houses.

DGHP Waiting List figures are as follows –

October 2007 – 9 applicants

September 2008 – 14 applicants

February 2009 – 10 applicants

There have been no tenancy movements in these houses in the last 12 months.

Although the waiting list figures are quite low it was noted in the DGSCHT report that none of the emerging households had applied to be on a housing association waiting list. The main reasons appeared to be that respondents were not eligible or did not feel it was worth putting their name on the list when there was very little chance of being allocated a property within the community.

This is a common view expressed in rural communities particularly when there are very few properties owned by Housing Associations. It is often found that when a development commences on site the number of applicants on the waiting list increases.

It is expected that this 'hidden demand' will apply to Ae.

It is hoped that Loreburn's Local Lettings Initiative (see 4.5) will also encourage local people to apply for the new housing.

2.7 What types and mix of housing is needed?

Loreburn is committed to providing balanced and sustainable communities throughout Dumfries & Galloway and therefore a balance of housing types is proposed at Ae. The tenure and housing mix has been approved by Government and the Council's Housing Services.

It is important that family houses are provided to sustain a good balance of age groups in the village and to assist in keeping the primary school open.

It has been noted through consultation with the community that there are a number of elderly people in the village who are currently under occupying large family homes. These homes may also be becoming unmanageable due to frailty, fuel costs etc and it has been indicated that some may be interested in applying for smaller amenity housing provided by Loreburn.

2.8 Additional information on local need:

The SHIP 2009-10 has been approved by Dumfries & Galloway Council.

This site in Ae has been included in the document for 12 units for development in financial year 09-10.

The site is coded green which indicates that it is a priority for investment in 2009-10.

3. USE OF TIMBER AND TIMBER PRODUCTS, AND WOODFUEL FOR HEATING

The RSL must ensure the maximum appropriate use of timber and timber products in any affordable housing built, including certified products, timber cladding, locally

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sourced timber, and woodfuel for heating. Please provide examples of previous work completed which illustrates your commitment: refer to photographs, web pages and relevant publications.

3.1 Sustainability:

The proposed units will feature soft wood double glazed windows, and will be insulated to provide low u-values for walls roofs and ground floors to generate high SAP values. It is proposed that renewable energy will also be generated on site through a biomass community heating system. The compact site also offers protection from the elements because of the proximity of the units to one another while still maximizing the sunlight they experience. A SUDs feature will be included in the development to deal with the surface water run off from the roads and roofs. This sustainable feature limits the amount of waste water which needs to be dealt with at treatment works.

The site will be built to Secured by Design Standards (Police Accreditation for security) which will foster a safe and sustainable community.

3.2 Tell us how the units are likely to be built: e.g. what instructions will you give your architect re timber and timber product use and woodfuel heating systems?

The method of construction is timber frame with masonry outer leaf which has a dry-dash finish. The units will have timber windows (and possibly fascias and soffits) sourced locally from a company registered under the PEFC scheme. A biomass boilerhouse will provide community heating for the development. There are many biofuel providers nearby, so sourcing fuel from sustainable resources will be easily managed.

3.3 Will the timber and timber products be certified yes/no? e.g. Forestry Stewardship Council, PEFC.

Yes. Our contractor is committed to ensuring that their suppliers are sourcing materials within their Environmental Policy. Our contractors preferred supplier of timber kits is Alexander Timber Frame (Adam Scott & Sons – Parent Company) who are Scotland's largest privately owned home-grown timber producers, and guarantee that 100% of round timber used for sawmill production is procured from British Forests which are certified under the Forestry Stewardship Council. A Copy of Adam Wilson & Sons FSC certification is attached.

3.4 Use of local timber and timber products:

The principal suppliers of timber, engineered wood products and oriented strand board (OSB) will be registered under the internationally recognised PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes) and FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) chain of custody schemes.

3.5 The structure:

As we propose to use a timber kit construction the structural skeleton of the buildings will be entirely timber.

3.6 Cladding

Photographs and architects elevations showing timber cladding were included in a presentation made to the Community Council and members of the community. It was made clear by the community that they would not support the use of timber cladding on the houses as this would be too much of a deviation from the external finishes on other properties in the village and the properties neighbouring the site.

The Forest District Manager was in attendance at this meeting and heard the views of the community. It was agreed following this meeting that timber cladding would not be included in the future design of the houses.

3.7 Woodfuel:

A Biomass district heating system is proposed for this site. The specification of the biomass boiler or the fuel type is not yet agreed however several requests for quotations have been sent out and feedback is expected in the coming weeks.

Advice has been sought to date from the FCS Woodfuel Information Officer and through discussions with him a number of contacts have been made with other RSL's, boiler manufacturers / suppliers and woodfuel suppliers.

The specification of the boiler and fuel will be decided based on advice received and the availability of woodfuel supply, preferably from a local supplier however this may not be possible.

3.8 Do you envisage any particular problems with your vision for the development?

The Scottish Government's new funding regime has put great pressure on the costs attached to development of affordable housing and it has become very difficult to make the costs meet the new targets. This is particularly prevalent when the unit numbers are low, in a project such as Ae.

To assist the development of affordable housing in rural areas Dumfries & Galloway Council has committed additional funding to the project.

It is also anticipated that funding will be available from SCHRI or CERT to offset some of the costs of a Biomass heating system.

The provision of a Biomass system will be subject to the full development costs meeting the Scottish Government targets, however the additional funding available will assist in meeting the targets.

4. EVIDENCE OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Provide evidence of community consultation for your proposals:

4.1 What contact has there been with the community council, local councillor, or other community body?

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Following obvious concerns raised in the Housing Survey undertaken by DGSCHT Loreburn was keen to work directly with the Community to take the development proposals forward. It was made clear that no decision in terms of layout, mix and development of the land had been taken prior to any community consultation taking place.

Community Council / Public Consultation

In July and November 2007 Loreburn representatives met with the Ae District Manager for FCS and Community Council members to put forward Loreburn's proposals for the site and to discuss the best way forward. At the meeting in November 07 it was agreed that several development options would be prepared for public comment.

It was also agreed that a public meeting was not the best forum for the first public consultation in regards this development, as some residents may be discouraged from speaking at such a meeting.

In **December 2007** Loreburn's consultation van parked in Ae village and all local households were invited to come along and meet representatives from Loreburn's Housing & Development departments. Layout options and an information sheet were on display (and available to take away) for local people to view and comment on. All those who visited the van were asked to complete a short questionnaire designed to give an indication of the views of local people on the proposals.

Following the consultation a letter was issued to the Community Council confirming the results and asking for further support for an affordable housing development in Ae. (A copy of the letter and questionnaire are attached).

A response to this consultation was received from the Community Council in **July 08**. The letter outlined the community's main concerns and asked Loreburn to attend a public meeting. A response was sent to the Community Council briefly commenting on the concerns raised.

It was agreed that Loreburn would attend the Community Council Meeting on **4 September 2008** to discuss the issues in detail.

At this time Loreburn made presentations on the development proposals and Allocation Policy to a public meeting, at which approximately 25 local people attended. Concerns were raised and solutions were discussed, although it was noted that Loreburn were not able to commit to the solutions without third party input (Scottish Water, utility providers etc). All comments and concerns of the community were noted and will be considered throughout the design process.

Loreburn advised that to move to the next step written confirmation of support was required from the Community Council. Loreburn and FCS representatives left the meeting and the Community Council and public were left to discuss.

A letter was received from the Community Council on **18 September 2008** confirming that the community had voted to support a Loreburn development in Ae on the understanding that the concerns which they had raised should be addressed (see 4.5).

Following confirmation of support from the Community Council the architect was instructed to develop some proposed layouts which were displayed in the school for the public to view over a period of 2 weeks in **October 2008**. A letter was sent to all Ae residents informing them that the layouts were available. A questionnaire was enclosed with this letter however only 2 responses were received.

Local Councillor

The local councillor has been kept informed of the progress of this site and has been invited to all of the public meetings and consultation days.

A meeting was held with the Councillor on **11 October 2007** regarding a number of sites. A small information pack was provided to give some additional information on the proposals for Ae village. The local Councillor was in attendance at the public meeting in October and it is expected his interest in this development will continue as we continue to progress to design stage.

4.2 What consultation with the wider community has taken place or is planned?

See above. Further consultation will take place as we advance through detailed design and onto a site start. It is expected that the Community Council will receive regular updates on the development and when there are specific areas of concern it is expected that Loreburn will attend public meetings.

As Sewerage and Electricity outages are of particular concern to the local community it is hoped that a joint meeting with the Community, Loreburn and Scottish Water / Scottish Power can be arranged to resolve any problems and alleviate concerns.

The Ae District Manager for FCS will also be kept updated throughout and will be invited to future meetings.

4.3 Has there been any local media coverage of your proposals?

No

4.4 How have your proposals been received by the community?

There has been over 2 years discussion and consultation with the community and the community are supportive of Loreburn's development proposals for affordable houses at Ae.

Community support has been received however it is clear that this support is subject to resolution of a number of issues which are noted below. Loreburn has made it clear to the Community that they will continue to be consulted and involved in the development process and that all of the concerns raised to date will be considered and discussed at an appropriate time in the design process.

4.5 Are there any material concerns from the community?

As noted above throughout the consultation the community have raised a number of concerns regarding the development. At such an early stage in the development it has not been possible to provide answers to these concerns, partly due to the input required from third parties such as Scottish Water, Scottish Power and BT. The community have been reassured that these issues will be considered at the most appropriate time in the development process and it is hoped that joint meetings can be held with the third parties noted above.

The concerns raised by the community as noted in a letter from the Community Council dated 18 September 2008 are as follows –

- vehicular access to the site during construction
- electrical supply / loading (for the development and the village)
- water pressure and supply
- rainwater disposal
- sewage disposal
- telecommunications load

The community also voiced concerns that allocation of the houses will attract people from outside the village and surrounding area who will bring with them a number of social problems. To combat this fear, Loreburn Housing Association has a Local Lettings Initiative as part of the Allocations Policy.

This means that 20 additional points are awarded to applications from people with a local connection to the village. This is likely to make a significant difference to the allocation of houses in small rural communities as local people are likely to have a good advantage over applicants without a local connection.

The community have been made aware of this initiative and have been encouraged to submit applications and discuss their applications with the Housing Officer to ensure they are maximising their point level and therefore giving themselves the best chance at an allocation.

A copy of the Allocations Policy including the Local Lettings Initiative is attached for information.

5. RETENTION OF HOUSING IN THE AFFORDABLE SECTOR

For social rental housing:

5.1 Do your tenants have a right to buy yes/no?	No
5.2 Tell us how you would retain the units in the affordable sector:	
N/A – Loreburn tenants do not have the Right to Buy as Loreburn is a Registered Charity. All houses at this site are proposed for rent therefore will remain in the affordable sector indefinitely.	
5.3 <i>For low cost home ownership units:</i> Tell us how you would retain the units in the affordable sector:	
N/A	