

National Forest Land Scheme (Affordable Housing)

Recommendation of the Evaluation Panel

18th March 2009

Applicant: Loreburn Housing Association

Land: Land at Ae village, Dumfries

1 Purpose

1.1 For the Director to consider the recommendation of the NFLS Evaluation Panel that the application by the Loreburn Housing Association should be approved.

2 Background

2.1 Loreburn are an established Association with an impressive track record.

2.2 The site is a grazing field immediately to the east end of the former forest village. The site overlooks the FCS Ae Forest District administration and training complex and a mountain bike trail centre. Ae forest with its well used recreational amenities is adjacent.

2.3 Planning Permission will be sought if the NFLS application is successful.

3 Change of land use

3.1 The Panel noted that Forestry Commission Scotland is content with the proposed change of use and that a change of use to affordable housing was appropriate.

3.2 The site has been resumed from an agricultural tenancy.

4 Maximum appropriate use of timber/timber products and woodfuel

4.1 Loreburn intend to use timber frame but have agreed with the community that cladding is not appropriate at this location.

4.2 Good guidance has been obtained from the FCS woodfuel officer and Loreburn have expanded their options for woodfuel as a result. A scheme is being considered that would be extended to existing properties in the village.

5 Assessment of local need

5.1 The Panel was satisfied that local need had been demonstrated very comprehensively in the application.

6 Evidence of Community Consultation

6.1 Loreburn had made extensive efforts to consult the local community, in association with the FDM.

6.2 Loreburn's Local Lettings Initiative is a strength and is an excellent example of a method to improve the statutory occupant selection process.

6.3 There are some concerns from existing residents over the provision of services to the site although these are all regarded as solvable.

6.4 Loreburn commissioned their own valuation and a District Valuation is awaited from FCS.

7 Retention of housing in the affordable sector

7.1 All the housing units will be rented without any Right to Buy as Loreburn are exempt. This will prevent houses being sold on by residents.

Recommendation

The Panel recommend that the the application by Loreburn Housing Association should be approved.

Malcolm Wield
National Forest Land Scheme Programme Manager
Highland and Islands Conservancy

25th March 2009

Director's decision