



1. Background Information	
1.1 Land:	To the rear of the Forestry Commission Office, Tower Road, Smithton, Inverness
1.2 Area (ha):	1.41
1.3 FCS Forest District:	Inverness, Ross & Skye
1.4 FCS Area Land Agent:	CKD Galbraith JOHN MACKENZIE
1.5 Change of land use to affordable housing recommended by FCS yes/no?	Yes
1.6 Name of housing body:	Albyn Housing Society Ltd
1.7 Registered Social Landlord yes/no?	Yes
1.8 Is this project supported by Scottish Government Housing Investment Division yes/no?	Yes
1.9 Additional information	
<p>Albyn Housing Society is a Registered Social Landlord as well as being a charitable limited company, number SCO27123. We are also registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator, reference no 64.</p> <p>Albyn Housing has been in operation since 1973 and currently we have 2,324 rented units as well as 182 Shared Ownership/Shared Equity properties in which we hold a share.</p> <p>We are the major housing provider of new affordable housing in the Highlands with a programme for 2009/2010 with the Scottish Government to provide 161 units with a Grant requirement associated to this of £14,250,000.</p>	
1.10 Provide information on the area where the housing is to be built eg population of village	
<p>The housing is to be built to the rear of the existing Forestry Commission offices in Smithton and is the former Forestry sawmill site.</p> <p>The population of Culloden and Ardersier Ward is 11,029. (Of this population 18.4% are aged between 0 and 15 years. 47.3% are aged between 16 and 49 years. 20.3% are aged between 50 and 64 years. 8.1% are aged between 65 and 74 years. 4.5% are aged between 75 and 84 years and 1.5% are over 85 years).</p> <p>Smithton is an extremely popular residential area.</p>	

1.11 Map of site attached yes/no?		Yes	
1.12 Map of site within context of the surrounding area attached yes/no?			
No			
1.13 Number of houses/units:		21 units	
1.14 Rental:	15	1.15 Low cost home ownership:	6
1.16 Additional information:			
Our project objectives to meet the Scottish Governments requirements are as follows:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide affordable, quality housing for rent and for sale in an area of significant demand • Contribute to the social and economic sustainability of the area by ensuring a high quality of life • Increase housing supply • Improve the quality and effectiveness of housing • Development of a brownfield site • Contribute to sustainable design and CO2 reductions 			
1.17 Housing mix:			
LCHO:			
4 x 2bed/3person cottage flats			
2 x 3bed/5person semi detached houses			
Rent:			
6 x 2bed/3person cottage flats			
4 x 2bed/4person semi detached houses			
4 x 3bed/5person semi detached houses			
1 x 4bed/6person detached house			
1.18 Tell us where your project is in the planning/development process:			
We have undertaken extensive feasibility works on this site -			
<i>Contamination:</i>			
There is a large area of sawdust to the right hand side of the Forestry Commission Office which is deemed to be contaminated and due to the volume we were advised that we shouldn't remove or interfere with this area. As well as this area, there are various pockets of contamination across the site including arsenic, hydrocarbons and further pockets of sawdust (copy of Envirocentre's plan showing contamination enclosed). We engaged with Envirocentre/ our design team and The Highland Councils Contaminated Land Unit to come up with the most economical and sustainable way to deal with these contaminants. We have reached agreement that we will bio-remediate the areas outwith the large sawdust area by placing a layer of plastic			

membrane (visqueen) on top of the large sawdust area, transferring the other pockets of contamination onto this visqueen and mixing it with some form of treatment product, after the material has been mixed the material will sit for approx 6 months but will occasionally be turned over to help the remediation process. After approx 6 months samples of the material will be taken and tested to ensure all of the contamination has gone. Once the material has been confirmed as being "clean" it is ready for us to re-use.

We have appointed a Landscape Architect to help us meet the full potential of the area where the sawdust/bio-remediation material is being left. It is our expectation that a footpath from the new properties, through this area will give a direct link to the main street for our tenants/owner occupiers as well as having an attractive landscaped area with potentially some benches for the entire community to use and benefit from.

Demolition/Bat Survey:

We have yet to submit for demolition warrant of the existing sheds on the site but we have undertaken a bat survey to pre-empt the request for this to be done. We confirm that there is no evidence of bats within the sheds or elsewhere on the site.

Trees:

With the appointment of an Arboriculturalist as well as our Landscape Architect it is hoped we will be able to limit the loss of trees on site. This has been an aspect of great concern to the local Community Council whom we have consulted with extensively.

Planning:

We have had an initial meeting on site with the Planners to discuss our proposals. This meeting went well and our plans appeared well received.

It is our intention to submit a detailed planning application prior to the end of December 2009.

2. Assessment of Local Need *You must provide evidence of local need:*

2.1 Has a local needs survey been carried out? No

2.2 Relevant information:

A Local needs survey has not been carried out, however, we know from the Common Housing Register that there are 1047 applicants who have applied to live in Smithton and 1661 applicants who have applied to live in Culloden.



The overall demand for housing in Inverness is the highest of all the districts within the Highland Council area. In terms of Highland Housing Register applicants compared to lets, pressure is greatest in Inverness – 12 applicants for each let and in Inverness in particular, homelessness has increased significantly according to official figures.

We also have approx 150 applicants currently live within our Shared Equity scheme for Inverness.

2.3	Has a local housing market survey been undertaken?	No
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2.4	Relevant information:
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2.5	Is there a housing strategy relevant to the local area?	Yes
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2.6	Relevant information:
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All affordable housing investment made by Albyn Housing Society is governed by 3 key strategies which are regularly underpinned by decisions of area-based local development forums. They are:

1. The Highland Council Local Housing Strategy which sets out how the Council and it's partners will meet people's needs and deal with housing issues over the next 5 years.
2. The Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP). This identifies the key housing investment priorities based on assessment of need and demand and tentatively suggest budgets over the plan period.
3. Albyn's Strategic Funding and Development Plan (SDFP). This is Albyn's development planning tool which bids for resources of HAG (Housing Association Grant) to meet real project timetables of which Smithton forms and important element of 2011/2012.

2.7	Can you provide confirmation of local waiting list numbers?
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Yes – as per section 2.2

2.8	What types and mix of housing is needed?
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A mix of 1 and 2 beds was identified as being needed for this site. With this in mind we have provided 10 2bed properties for rent as well as some family sized housing which we know is always welcomed.

We have identified that 2bed and 3 bed properties meet the biggest demand for our Shared Equity units.

2.9 Additional information on local need:

The pressure for housing in Inverness is ever increasing with Inverness being noted by the Highland Council as one of the main areas of priority for housing in the Highlands. This is obvious from the number of live applicants from the statistics above.

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 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:

Aviemore North:

Albyn Housing Society Ltd. initiated this innovative development comprising 208 dwellings (103 affordable and 105 private) which was completed in 2008. The brief was also intended to create an exemplar development in terms of sustainability, energy conservation and use of materials, and as part of our solution we adopted extremely low U-values to the design of the building fabric along with the largest bio-mass district heating system in the UK and use of locally sourced timber cladding etc. Such a large development, at the visually prominent northern gateway to Aviemore could have generated considerable negative reaction and criticism, but in fact apart from some initial concern over the emissions from the biomass district heating plant (actually located on the nearby Dalfaber Industrial Estate), passed through the Cairngorm National Park Authority Planning process very smoothly. All the houses are constructed from FSC approved timber frame kits, partially clad with Scottish grown larch supplied by Russwood Ltd. Some 25% of the affordable homes are 100% clad with larch.

Fort Augustus:

This was a site we purchased from the Forestry Commission through the National Forest Land Scheme and went on to build 8 new properties. In conjunction with the Forestry Commission and after lengthy discussions with the Community Council, we used local timber, in particular we piloted the use of spruce on these properties.

Glenmore:

We adopted the same approach with Glenmore as we did in Fort Augustus by using locally sourced timber. These properties however we a more extensive use of timber externally and also as structural timber within the properties.

After extensive discussions with the Community Council, these properties also benefit from "wide wall" insulation which produce a 40% savings on CO2 emissions as well as benefiting from rainwater harvesting – making these properties particularly environmentally friendly.

This site also brought back into use a brownfield site which is part of the Forestry Commissions policy for selling off redundant sites for affordable housing, this as well as Fort Augusts demonstrated good partnership working between Albyn and the Forestry Commission.

These 2 properties have won 2 awards –

Inside Housing – CIH – Best small sustainable social housing
Roses Design Awards – bronze award

Photographs of Aviemore, Fort August and Glenmore are attached.

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

We will strive to achieve an aesthetic, which is sympathetic, and complementary to the Forest Enterprise offices adjacent to the site, both in terms of built forms (roof pitch, gable width etc) and the widespread use of timber cladding. We will not require the use of wood fuel district heating on this site although we will be carrying out an options appraisal for the heating system including renewables.

3.3 Will the timber and timber products be certified yes/no?

Eg Forestry Stewardship Council, PEFC

Yes, our architects will ensure that the timber frame structure and cladding are all FSC approved – with as much of the cladding sourced in Scotland as possible within our financial constraints.

3.4 Use of local timber and timber products:

Our architects have completed almost 20 projects successfully utilising timber cladding supplied locally. We will of course look for the highest quality products at the most reasonable cost. There are a number of companies locally whom we would approach to provide our local timber.

3.5 The structure:

The structure will be 148mm timber frame walls throughout, prefabricated timber roof trusses, timber intermediate floors (except the two storey 'cottage style' flats) and internal partitions.

3.6 Cladding:

The architects will be specifying Scottish grown larch as per the elevations, for both treatment with 'Sadolin' "Superdec" timber stain and using heartwood

only in a channel profile left unstained on selected panels.

3.7 Woodfuel:

We are not intending on using woodfuel on this site. It is expected that the heating will either be mains gas + solar panels or Air Source Heat Pumps.

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

No

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?

We have attended 2 Community Council meetings at which the local Councillors are present. The 1st meeting was to gauge their support of affordable housing in this location and answer any concerns they had. The 2nd meeting was to go over in more detail our exact plans for the site prior to submitting a Planning Application.

We also wrote to the local Residents Association but to date have not received a response.

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

None planned at present.

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

No.

4.4 How have your proposals been received by the community?

The Community Council had some initial concerns about flooding from the burn, housing mix and loss of trees on site.

Flooding:

Our Engineer has prepared a drainage impact assessment which should alleviate their concerns regarding the burn flooding. There had been a flood some 10 years ago in Smithton from this particular burn, but it was proven to have flooded further downstream and not in the area which we hope to purchase. We are satisfied that there is no risk associated to the burn flooding.

Housing Mix:

Their concerns regarding housing mix was in relation to how many units we intended to have for sale through our Shared Equity Scheme and how many would be for rent. Having discussed our proposals for 6 units for LCHO and 15 units for rent the Community Council are happy with this apportionment.

Loss of Trees:

We have appointed a Landscape Architect who has helped us to deal with the Community Councils concerns at the loss of trees on the site and are also in the process of appointing an arboriculturalist to assess the condition of the existing trees. We met with the Highland Councils Forestry Officer and have agreed a strategy for dealing with the existing trees on site. We are trying to ensure that there is minimum loss of trees on site.

4.5 Are there any material concerns from the community?

See above.

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:

The rented element of this scheme will be signed up to the standard Scottish Short Assured Tenancy in which they do not have the right to buy.

5.3 For low cost home ownership units:

Tell us how you would retain the units in the affordable sector:

Our Shared Equity scheme allows for a golden share to be held of the property by the Scottish Government (minimum of 20% of value of property). We also have the right of pre-emption to ensure that should the owner decide to sell, they have to offer the property back to the housing provided for first refusal to purchase back.

This will be procured in exactly the same way as Fort Augustus – as approved by the Forestry Commission.



Finishing Your Application

Applicant Signature

An Office Bearer of the applicant organisation should sign this declaration. It must be a different person to the main contact given in Section 1.

Part of the information that you give us will be held electronically. It will be used for administering and analysing applications.

I declare that:

The information given in this application and in any other documentation that supports this application is accurate.

Title <i>MR</i>	First Name <i>DONALD</i>	Surname <i>LOCKHART</i>
Position held in your organisation	<i>DEVELOPMENT SCIENCES DIRECTOR</i>	
Date <i>25.11.09.</i>	Signature 	