

National Forest Land Scheme (Land for Affordable Housing)

Consideration of Application by Director FCS

Land: Land adjacent to Farr Bay House, Bettyhill
Applicant: Highland Small Communities Housing Trust

Purpose

1. For the Director to consider an application by the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust (HSCHT) to purchase 0.3ha of land at Bettyhill.

Background

2. Extensive discussions between HSCHT, the Community Council and FCS have been going on since 2001. This is the very last piece of FCS ground within Bettyhill village.
3. No affordable housing has been built in Bettyhill since 1990. House prices are generally regarded as too expensive for young people and several families have left the area in recent years.

Key points

4. The Evaluation Panel considered the application at their meeting on 30th August 2007. They unanimously recommended that the sale be approved. Their recommendation is set out at Appendix 1.
5. There is a well established and genuine housing need in the area. Bettyhill is regarded as a priority for the development of affordable housing in the Local Housing Strategy.
6. The Community Council are very supportive of the proposal.
7. Two houses would be built on the plot.
8. The site is within the village 'envelope' and services are close to hand. Access is shared with neighbours but is straightforward and not contentious.

Recommendation

9. To approve the application as recommended by the Evaluation Panel.

Director's decision

Panel recommendations agreed

R. Mitchell

14/9/07

Malcolm Wield
Rural Development Adviser
Highland Conservancy

12 September 07