

The National Forest Land Scheme

Land for Affordable Housing

Applicant: Highland Small Communities Housing Trust

Land: Three house sites at Camustorsa, Salen, Ardnamurchan

Recommendation

1. The Panel recommend this application for approval and commend it.

Background

2. The Camustorsa application is made by HSCHT who are an 'appropriate' body supported by Communities Scotland. They are a known quantity and previous sales have been made to the organisation successfully.
3. The 3 families who will occupy the houses live locally, are young forestry contractors with self build skills and are small scale employers. They all desire to remain and base their business in the locality. They form a significant core demographic group within the local population.
4. The families qualify for Rural Home Ownership Grant.
5. Affordable house sites are rare in the area and prices have increased dramatically in recent years. There is a high proportion of holiday homes.
6. The Panel thought this an exciting and novel application and hope it is an inspiration for others. Panel recommended Di Alexander's work. Malcolm Wield broached prospect of using him to spread expertise. Case study could be written up to go out to communities as example of excellence.

Change of land use

7. Forestry Commission Scotland is supportive of the proposed change of use to housing.
8. The Panel wished to know how the site was identified and would have liked more information on this and how the size was decided. This would usually be addressed by all sites being visited in advance of panel decision.

Maximum appropriate use of timber/timber products and woodfuel

9. This application is most sympathetic to the procurement of local timber, local processing and self build. The houses will have a maximum

component of timber, have a post and beam design, will be larch clad, will be well insulated and will be heated by woodfuel. Discussions have been held with the local FCS staff who will sell local logs to the group for milling.

Assessment of local need

10. Local need is very well demonstrated and genuine. The houses will be built for family needs. THC Planning have indicated support for the proposal and services are adjacent to the site.

Evidence of Community Consultation

11. The community is very supportive of the proposals with the proviso that 'no further development' takes place on the site. The Community Council have been pro-actively engaged and consulted by the applicants.

Retention of housing in the affordable sector

12. Will be via Rural Housing Burden.