

Highland wide Local Development Plan - Main Issues Report Consultation Summary and Actions Sheet

Reference Number:	HWLDP-MIR-246
Organisation/Individual:	Robertson Homes (Bruce Walker)

Action:

Immediate Response Required	
Meeting required with Respondent	x
Issue for Area Local Development Plan	x
Further Information Required	x
Other (Please Specify)	

If no box ticked - issues raised will be dealt with in preparation of the Proposed Plan.

Issues Raised in Response:

Purpose of Main Issues Report		Previously used Land	
NPF2 for Scotland		Wild Land	
Vision for the Highlands		Water Environment	
Inverness and A96	x	Renewable Energy	x
The A96 Corridor		Flooding	
Phasing of Development		Waste Management	
Developer Contributions		Air Quality	
East Inverness		Sustainable Design	
Nairn		Business and Industrial Land	
Tornagrain		Accessibility and Transport	x
Smaller Settlements in A96		Agricultural Land	
Caithness and North Sutherland		Subdivision of Existing Crofts	
Easter Ross and Nigg		Allocation of Inbye Land	
Development of Local Centres		New Crofting Township	
Wider Countryside and Fragile Areas		Small Scale New Crofts	
Population and Housing		Coastal Development	
Housing in the Countryside		Forestry and Woodland	x
Affordable Housing	x	Minerals	
Planning for an Ageing Population		Open Space and Physical Activity	
Gypsies/Travellers		Access to the Outdoors	
Retailing		Comments on Consultation Process (+ve)	
Developer Contributions	x	Comments on Consultation Process (-ve)	
Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage			

Key:

Background	Spatial Strategy	Policy Options	Consultation
------------	------------------	----------------	--------------

Notes:

Recognises infrastructure constraints and the imbalance of development that this may cause the city
Further information required on proposals for Westerbraigs
No need to increase affordable housing threshold beyond 25%

Action Sheet Completed by:	SH
Date:	10/12/09

Dawn Sutherland

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 November 2009 15:22
To: devolans
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: MIR Submissions obo Robertson Homes



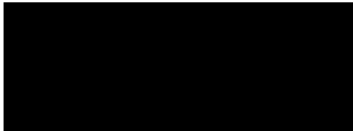
HIGHLAND WIDE
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Malcolm and Team,

Please find enclosed submissions to the Highland Wide Local Development Plan on behalf of Robertson Homes.

I would be grateful if you could confirm safe receipt.

Regards
Bruce Walker
Land Director
Robertson Homes
Robertson House
Castle Business Park
STIRLING
FK9 4TZ



(See attached file: HIGHLAND WIDE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN-MIR REPS.doc)

IMPORTANT NOTICE: This E-mail and any attachment is intended for the above named addressee only and may be confidential. If you have received it in error delete it, inform the sender and do not copy, distribute or take any action in reliance upon it.

WARNING: E-mail is not a secure medium of communication and we may monitor all incoming and outgoing emails in line with current legislation. Please bear this in mind when E-mailing us. Although this E-mail and its attachments are believed to be free from any virus, it is your responsibility to ensure that E-mails and attachments are virus free on receipt.

Robertson Companies as detailed below are Registered in Scotland with the registered office at 10 Perimeter Road, Elgin, IV30 6AE.

Companies and Registration Numbers
Robertson Group Limited SC60077
Robertson Homes Limited SC151825
Robertson Construction Eastern Limited SC249936
Robertson Construction Northern Limited SC249934
Robertson Construction Highland Limited SC327968
Robertson Construction NEE Limited SC249935
Robertson Construction Central Limited SC249933
Robertson Construction Tayside Limited SC292999

Robertson Construction Lothians Limited SC329233
Robertson Property Limited SC103160
Robertson Timberkit Limited SC166924
Robertson Facilities Management Limited SC185956
Robertson Capital Projects Limited SC227159

This email has been scanned by Netintelligence
<http://www.netintelligence.com/email>

HIGHLAND WIDE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

MAIN ISSUES REPORT

SUBMISSIONS BY ROBERTSON HOMES LIMITED

NOVEMBER 2009

1.0 Introduction

1.1 These submissions are submitted on behalf of Robertson Homes and relate to the Company's significant land-holding at Westercraigs, Inverness. These land-holdings extend to over 117 hectares (290 acres) and are zoned for development in the Inverness Local Plan. The site is also the subject of an approved Development Brief and benefits from a series of planning permissions, outline, detailed and reserved matters.

1.2 The purpose of this submission is to promote additional but complementary development opportunities within the land-holding. In particular, these submissions recognise the need to maximise the development potential of sites already allocated for development as prescribed by national guidance generally and SPP3 in particular.

1.3 The development potential of the site can be realised within the period covered by the forthcoming local development plan for the area i.e. 2009 to 2014 and it is therefore appropriate to make submissions to this Main Issues Report (MIR).

2.0 The Site

2.1 The site known as Westercraigs lies to the west of Inverness and was previously used for health care purposes. The site became surplus to requirements when the New Craigs Hospital became operational in early 2000. Much of the site is brownfield in nature and is dominated by the main hospital building; a category B listed building which overlooks Inverness and the Moray Firth.

2.2 The site lies adjacent to the built up area of Kinmylies, a substantial urban extension to Inverness developed during the 1970's and is within 2 miles of Inverness City Centre. The boundaries of the site are represented by the new hospital and Charleston to the north and east, Kilvean cemetery and the A82 (T) to the south east and wooded slopes of Craig Phadrig to the south and west. Dunain Hill is located some distance further south.

3.0 Planning Status

3.1 The site is zoned for development in the Inverness Local Plan adopted in March 2006. The Local Plan anticipates the site being the focus of development in the western part of the City during the life of the local plan. The Local Plan deals with the two parts of the site separately i.e. the former hospital site at Policy 8 (vi) (page 33) and Charleston at Policy 38 (v) (page 38) as follows;

(vi) CRAIG DUNAIN: (80 Ha) the former Hospital, a magnificent 19C Listed Building set in mature “parkland”. Hotel, educational, business/office, and residential use or an appropriate mix of such activities is promoted, subject to section 75 agreement to secure rehabilitation/re-occupation of the main buildings, upgrading of access and other services including integrated water supply improvements, and a long term landscape plan. Upgrading of Leachkin Road and other distributor roads as set out in the approved Development Brief, could be supplemented by public transport, cycle and pedestrian links. Developer requirements will include relocation of any displaced recreation facilities.

(v) CHARLESTON: 55.0 Ha of land dependent upon completion of phase V of the (including a canal crossing) of the A9-A82 Trunk Road Link (Route O) for which developer contributions will be expected. In this regard, development of brownfield land at Westercraigs with capacity for up to 140 houses could proceed prior to phase V of the A9-A82 Trunk Road Link. Development will incorporate a distributor road linking General Booth Road and Leachkin Road, mains utility and other services extended across the Caledonian Canal and integrated water supply improvements including additional water storage. Development will proceed substantially from the east with any limited early phase housing to Leachkin Road subject to Traffic Assessment, any requirement to upgrade the offsite road network, and without prejudice to Craig Dunain (see Policy 8 (vi) above).

3.2 Outline Planning Permission for a residential development and associated infrastructure, based on a submitted masterplan (as amended) was granted by Highland Council in May 2005. This outline planning permission was granted for a maximum of 550 residential units of which only 420 units could be constructed and occupied prior to the construction of phase V of the Inverness Southern Distributor Road (presumably subject to the proviso in the local plan extract referred to above) so as to provide a further road crossing of the Caledonian Canal and the River Ness.

3.3 A number of conditions within this permission linked the implementation of the development to the phased provision of infrastructure some of which have already been completed and the balance of which will be undertaken in accordance with the phased completion of the site.

3.4 As part of the granting of this outline planning permission, a section 75 agreement was signed between Robertson Homes Limited and Highland Council. This Agreement secured a number of developer contributions including a unit based contribution to housing development relating to development outwith area included within the original Craig Dunain masterplan area.

3.5 Since then a number of detailed and reserved matters applications for residential development have been granted on the site. These relate to the refurbishment of the main listed building to accommodate 124 units, 120 units on sites 1 and 2 and 181 units on site 4, a proportion of which are affordable housing. Approval was also received for a headquarters building for Scottish Natural Heritage which has now been implemented.

4.0 Comments on the Main Issues Report

4.1 It is not the purpose of this submission to respond to all matters raised in the MIR. Instead, the following comments focus on those issues which are of relevance to the Westercraigs site. In this regard it is noted that NPF 2 raises the importance of the role that natural heritage plays within the area in terms of tourism, leisure and sustainability and our proposals seek to promote development opportunities within this context.

4.2 In relation to the spatial strategy, the priority must be to ensure that the best use is made of land already identified for development and this is acknowledged on page 7 of the MIR where it is suggested that it may be appropriate to ensure the completion of existing expansion areas prior to new areas being identified. Within Inverness, there is a need to re-dress the distribution of development which to date has been concentrated around the eastern end of the Southern Distributor Road. Whilst this is understandable bearing in mind the availability of infrastructure in this location it has led to a skewed pattern of development to the detriment of the western part of the City as demonstrated on the plan on page 7 of the MIR.

4.3 The preferred option which confirms the need to prioritise the development of existing sites is supported and an updated masterplan for Westercraigs which reflects the new proposals for the site will be submitted to the Council for discussion in due course. This can be achieved at the same time as preparing masterplans for some of the new opportunities suggested in the MIR. In particular, the phasing of new development at Inverness East should reflect the need to ensure the completion of Westercraigs within the anticipated timeframe.

4.4 In terms of policy options for the Highland wide local development plan, the need to meet the requirements for new housing based on the high growth scenario is supported. This reflects the aspirations of the Scottish Government imbued in national guidance that Council's should plan for a generous supply of housing land. The proposed distribution of new housing provision which directs the majority of new housing development to Inverness is also supported.

4.5 Affordable housing continues to be a priority for the Council and the need for such accommodation is not disputed. However, we see no case for increasing the affordable housing requirement to beyond the figure of 25% of site capacity as set out in PAN 74. This is particularly the case where the current and continued difficulties in the land market are likely to compromise the viability of marginal sites if such percentages are to be increased. In fact, the Council should be looking to ameliorate the provision of affordable housing so as to ensure current and future sites remain effective in terms of the guidance within SPP 3. The need to support more innovative delivery mechanisms for the provision of affordable housing is however supported.

4.6 The issue of developer contributions is significant, particularly within the context of the more austere land market which currently prevails within the UK. If such contributions are to be sought, they must conform to the guidance within Circular 12/1996 and even then must be phased so as to ensure they do not compromise the overall viability of a particular development site. This issue is acknowledged in the MIR and is supported. The need for transparency and consistency is also supported.

4.7 In our view, there is significant potential to exploit renewable energy at Westercraigs within the context of a sustainable suburb/eco village. A masterplan is currently being prepared by consultants. This will set out our aspirations for the Westercraigs site, particularly that area beyond the existing development footprint but still within the boundaries of the previously approved masterplan area. It is likely that the masterplan will propose a variety of potential uses including renewable energy proposals, tourist accommodation, home working, community facilities and additional limited housing development all of which will be led by the need to deliver real and measurable sustainable living which encourages people to live within ecological limits whilst enjoying an high quality of life in an attractive environment.

4.8 The MIR also deals with accessibility and transport. Completion of the Southern Distributor Road remains a priority for the Council although the project does not feature within the Scottish Government's Strategic Roads Review. Furthermore, the remaining part of the route is the most difficult and costly part to deliver as it involves crossing both the Caledonian Canal and the River Ness and requires the relocation of a number of recreational facilities including Inverness Rugby Club.

4.9 The continued development of Westercraigs is dependent upon the completion of this link road. However, whilst the objective to complete the connection between the A9 (T) and the A82 (T) is supported it is possible that funding for the project may not be available within the short or even medium term. With this in mind, the forthcoming local plan should acknowledge the potential for the balance of the Westercraigs site to come forward in advance of the completion of the link road. This position is acknowledged in part in the extract from the adopted local plan referred to above i.e. **“development of land at Westercraigs with capacity for 140 houses could proceed prior to phase V of the A9-A82 Trunk Road Link.”** This potential must be pursued through the submission of a supporting Transport Assessment. Within this context, it should be noted that the unit based approach to developer contributions to the link road can be maintained; the only difference being that implementation of this road proposal will follow rather than lead the completion of the Westercraigs site.