

Development Matters

Issue 6

March 2007

A regular update produced by the Housing Development team of The Highland Council, designed to promote awareness by providing information about recent Housing Development activity in the Highlands.

Highland Housing Fair is launched!

In this edition of Development Matters we are featuring The Highland Housing Fair, which will be the first of its kind in the UK and is being staged in the Highlands in 2009 to showcase house building design and technology in the area. The Fair will be an innovative development of around 50 homes which will be at the cutting edge of modern design and sustainable building techniques.

The Housing Fair was formally launched at the beginning of February with a house design competition which is open to architects, builders, suppliers and designers with the winners being offered the chance to build their design.



2006 Finnish Housing Fair

The house design competition entries will be exhibited at the RIAS National Convention to be held in Inverness in May 2007 and the project will take centre stage as part of the Six Cities Festival of Creative Design/Year of Highland Culture. The idea of the Housing Fair is taken from Finland, where there is an annual fair held in a different community each year. It is the biggest outdoor event in Finland with several hundred thousand visitors, locals, tourists, architects and other design/building professionals in attendance.

Photos from the 2006 Finnish Housing Fair are shown above with more to be found on the following page.

Highland Housing Fair (continued)

The winning entries will have to build their houses in time for the fair to open in May 2009 when it will be marketed as a major event for locals, tourists, companies and construction professionals. All of the properties will be open to visitors for a whole month and there will be supporting displays/exhibitions/events within the Fair site. The [Highland Housing Alliance](#) will take forward the Housing Fair supported by a strong partnership led by the Council including the Scottish Executive, HIE, Communities Scotland, the Forestry Commission and other agencies. A cross agency working party chaired by Cllr William Ross is taking this exciting venture forward.

Planning permission has been granted to hold the Highland Housing Fair on land at Balvonie Braes, a 13 acre (5.2 hectare) site just off the A9 on the southern approaches to Inverness, near to Milton of Leys. As Inverness is the main gateway to the Highlands, the Fair is being held here to maximise industry involvement and visitor numbers. Initially part of the site will be devoted to the Housing Fair development plots, with the remainder as a temporary exhibition and car park. After the Fair is complete, the exhibition and car parking space will be redeveloped as affordable housing and community facilities to create a modern village.

Further details of the event can be found at www.highlandhousingfair.com



2006 Finnish Housing Fair

As shown by the photographs in this report, a wide range of housing types was on display at the 2006 Finnish Housing Fair which was held in Espoo. Some 263 homes have been developed on the 13 hectare site and the Fair demonstrates a mix of housing including opportunities for self build. Finnish Fairs have been organised for over 30 years and the Espoo fair attracted up to 200,000 visitors during the month it was open to the public.

The master planning of the Fair determined specific codes for each plot which informed architecture scale, house type, colour and material. The codes were very successful, as they gave sufficient diversity for interest but also provided an adequate amount of unifying elements to form a holistic community. The architecture was in general contemporary and utilised local materials in both a traditional and innovative way.

[Home Farm, Portree](#)

As reported in our last edition of Development Matters, Home Farm in Portree is a large mixed tenure development of over 200 new homes which Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association is developing. Portree has been identified as one of the most housing stressed areas in the Highlands and this development will meet the affordable housing requirements in Portree over the next 5 years.

This scheme will provide a total of 169 new affordable homes and the photos below show the 'work in progress' for Phase One.



The Phase One project will provide 31 high quality new homes for rent and 10 for Homestake (a shared equity form of Low Cost Home Ownership). It is anticipated that the first new homes will be ready for occupation by May 2007. The Phase Two project is scheduled to start on site in May 2007 and to be completed by October 2008. This phase will provide 25 homes for rent and 26 Homestake units.

Further information on [Homestake](http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk) is available from the Communities Scotland website www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk and for more information about the Home Farm development please contact James Stephenson, Project Officer, Development at Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association on 01478 612035 or email james@LSHA.co.uk

[Inverpark, Lochinver](#)



Albyn Housing Society, with funding made available from Communities Scotland, have now completed this development of 2 two bedroom houses and 6 three bedroom houses for affordable rent.

This scheme was enabled by the Council identifying an area of land in their ownership and partly in the ownership of Assynt Estates. The Council was able to purchase the Estate Land and transfer the entire area to Albyn Housing Society.

Elizabeth Crescent, Dornoch

Work began in February to build 4 two bedroom semi-detached houses in Dornoch, which will go on sale at a fixed price of £60,000 each. The houses for local first time buyers will be built at Elizabeth Crescent, part of the Bishopfield area, and are expected to be completed by the end of October 2007.

J & J Nicol (a private building company), in partnership with the Highland Council, the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust (HSCHT) and Communities Scotland are providing the low cost housing for local residents who wish to become homeowners but are unable to afford the open market value of private housing currently for sale in the area. This scheme has been grant aided by Communities Scotland under the Grant for Owner Occupation mechanism and has been delivered through the Council's affordable housing policy.

APPLY NOW TO BUY THIS AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Applications for the houses at Elizabeth Crescent, Dornoch are now welcome and preference will be given to local residents who are first time buyers and currently Highland Council or housing association tenants, and those on the waiting lists.

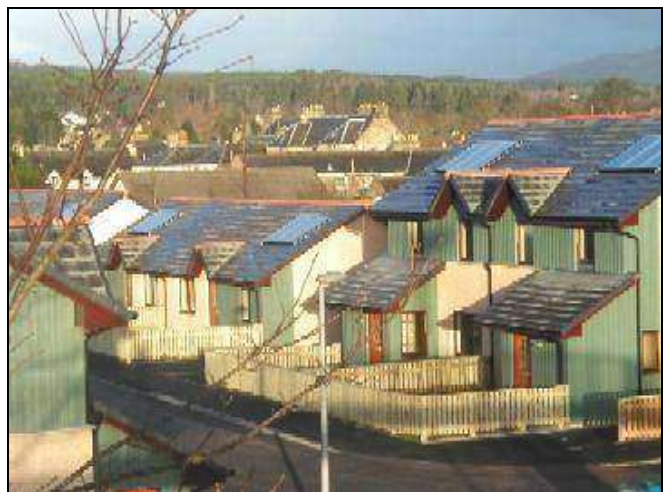
Anyone who is interested in applying to purchase one of the properties can get further information from the Dornoch Service Point, The Meadows, Dornoch IV25 3SG or by phoning Principal Housing Officer, Sally Sutherland on 01862 812015. Sally can also be emailed at sally.sutherland@highland.gov.uk

Application forms must be completed and returned by 30th March 2007

Academy Lane, Alness

Work has now been completed on this town centre site at Academy Lane, close to the High Street. The development by Albyn Housing Society provides 18 houses for affordable rent:- 8 three bedroom houses, 6 two bedroom houses and 4 two bedroom flats. In addition the development provides 10 two bedroom flats for affordable home ownership under the Homestake initiative.

The development has been made possible by the Council agreeing to relocate the former lorry park to an alternative site.



Former Allotment Site, Thurso



*An architect's impression of the new development at the former allotment site, Thurso
(courtesy of 'Pentarq')*

Discussion at the Caithness Area Housing Development Forum identified this area of Council owned land as having potential for housing development. The Council was able to identify alternative allotments for the tenants who were using the site, releasing the land which will be developed by Pentland Housing Association, commencing on site in April of this year. The development will provide a total of 22 new affordable homes, comprising 2 two bedroom wheelchair accessible bungalows, 8 two bedroom houses, 6 three bedroom houses and 6 four bedroom houses. Six of the completed properties will be available for affordable home ownership under the Homestake initiative with the remaining sixteen being for affordable rent.

Jenkins Park, Fort Augustus

Following our report in August, contractors have now started on site at Jenkins Park, Fort Augustus and completion is expected at the end of the year.

Eight homes are to be built here comprising 6 houses for rent (3 x 4 person, 2 x 5 person and 1 x 6 person) and 2 houses (2 x 4 persons) which will be sold to first time buyers or others who need help in becoming home owners through Homestake, the shared equity scheme. This scheme is designed for people on low incomes who can buy a property in partnership with a local housing association. Those eligible would normally buy 60 to 80 per cent of a property with the housing association providing the balance.

The land at Jenkins Park was transferred to Albyn Housing Society from Forestry Commission Scotland under the Sponsorship Scheme, the predecessor of the National Forest Land Scheme. Part of the scheme allows housing associations, supported by Communities Scotland, to buy land from Forestry Commission Scotland at reduced prices.

[Coteachan Hill, Mallaig](#)

Lochaber Housing Association have started work on site at Coteachan Hill in Mallaig to provide 16 houses comprising 8 two bedroom houses, 7 three bedroom houses and 1 five bedroom house. These homes will be available for affordable rent and it is anticipated that the development will be completed in early 2008. This scheme has been made possible through land made available by the Highland Council and funding from Communities Scotland.

[Strothers Lane, Inverness](#)

Communities Minister, Rhona Brankin, visited Inverness on 29th January to meet Janet MacMillan, who has bought a two bedroom flat at the 'La Scala' development in Strothers Lane.

Janet, a community nurse, bought her flat through the Homestake scheme of Low Cost Home Ownership which is aimed at those who want to be homeowners but cannot afford the full price on the open market. Janet had been living in overcrowded accommodation with her family but has now been able to buy her own home.

Strothers Lane is an excellent example of the implementation of the Council's affordable housing policy. This strategic housing site in the centre of Inverness was purchased by Wilburn Homes for a mixed private residential and commercial development. Following detailed negotiations with the Council's Housing Development team it was agreed that 13 of the new homes would be developed for low cost home ownership (using Homestake) out of a total of 54 new homes.

It was agreed that Cain Housing Association would be the nominated housing association and this project was funded through the Highland Council's Community Ownership Programme.

The individuals purchase price of their Homestake homes varied from £54,000 to £81,900 which represented shares of 51% to 78% of the flats which were valued at £105,000. The maximum share for Homestake is 80%.



[Wester Inshes, Inverness](#)



As part of a larger private housing development, Homestake units have been provided (through the Council's affordable housing policy) at Wester Inshes, Inverness.

The photo here shows two bedroom semi detached cottages available through this low cost home ownership scheme.

Woodside of Culloden

26 low cost home ownership houses have recently been sold by MacKintosh Highland and Strathnairn Ltd (private building companies) at Woodside of Culloden in Inverness. The schemes were grant aided by Communities Scotland under the Grant for Owner Occupation (GRO grant) mechanism and have been delivered through the Council's affordable housing policy.

The houses were targeted at first time buyers who were Council or housing association tenants, and those on their waiting lists. MacKintosh Highland sold 6 three bedroom houses at the price of £87,500 and 6 two bedroom houses at £82,000. Strathnairn Ltd sold 14 two bedroom houses for £82,000 each. There was a huge response to the adverts inviting interest from those eligible to apply and these schemes have given people an opportunity to own their own homes in Inverness at a reasonable price, with many of the purchasers moving in during March.



3 bedroom MacKintosh Highland houses at Westfield Way



2 bedroom Strathnairn houses at Woodside Park

“It's great to have been given this opportunity to buy affordable housing”

Staff Nurse Kelly Dawson applied to buy one of the two bedroom houses built by Strathnairn Ltd at Woodside of Culloden and she will soon be moving in to her new home.

Kelly was living in NHS accommodation at Raigmore Hospital but this was only available temporarily and she urgently needed to find alternative housing. Kelly was on the Council's waiting list for rented housing and along with many other first time buyers, Kelly found that she could not afford to buy on the open market. The affordable housing at Woodside became available at just the right time.

“We can't wait to move into our new house”

Marc Gardiner had been a Council tenant for over three years when he applied to buy one of the three bedroom houses built by MacKintosh Highland at Woodside of Culloden.

He will soon move in with his wife Lorraine and their two children. Having lived in the area for over eight years, the new house is conveniently located for his daughter's school and his son's nursery. The family have longed to become homeowners and were thrilled to learn that Marc's application to buy the GRO grant house had been successful.

Milton of Leys, Inverness

Cairn Housing Association have developed 56 new homes in partnership with Tullochs (a private building company) at Milton of Leys, Inverness. The homes are for rent and for low cost home ownership through Homestake and have been delivered through the Council's affordable housing policy.



LAND WANTED !

Do you own land that is zoned for housing, or that you think will be suitable for housing? (Minimum 4 houses).

If so, please contact:-

**Allan Maguire, Head of Housing Development
Housing Services
The Highland Council
Glenurquhart Road
Inverness IV3 5NX.**

**Tel: 01463 702528
Email: allan.maguire@highland.gov.uk**

Alternatively, contact:-

**Susan Torrance, Chief Executive
Highland Housing Alliance
C/O The Highland Council
Glenurquhart Road
Inverness IV3 5NX.**

**Tel: 01463 702894
Email: susan.torrance@highland.gov.uk**

For further information about the Highland Housing Alliance, please see their website www.highlandhousingalliance.com The Alliance has also been featured in previous issues of Development Matters.

Have you any comments or questions to be covered in future issues or at the Area Housing Development Forums?

If so, please write to the Housing Development team, Housing Services, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX or send an email to Heather Bebbington at heather.bebbington@highland.gov.uk (Tel: 01463 702831)