

Development Matters

Issue 3 February 2006

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.

Housing Success in Alness !

Alness is seeing a flurry of activity which will result in a range of houses to meet local needs.

Albyn Housing Society has started work on a town centre site, close to the High Street on Academy Lane, which will provide eight 3 bedroom houses, six 2 bedroom houses and four 2 bedroom flats for rent, with a further ten 2 bedroom flats for homeownership under the Homestake initiative. The houses should be completed by April 2007. The Council is moving its existing lorry park to another location to enable the housing to be built and the site was identified as a potential development through discussion at the Ross & Cromarty Area Housing Development Forum.

The Council agreed transfer of a site in Coulhill to Albyn Housing Society which has enabled a development to proceed which will provide 13 homes for sale under the Homestake initiative. These 2 and 3 bedroom homes should be completed by July 2007. The photographs below show the houses under construction.



A private building company, Deveron Homes, is redeveloping the former Cadboll Wood caravan park to provide 25 quality homes, of which 4 will be delivered through the Council's affordable housing planning policy as low cost homes for purchase by families who fulfil criteria agreed between the Council and Communities Scotland who have grant aided under the Grant for Owner Occupation mechanism. Deveron Homes have reported a high level of response to an advert inviting interest from people who are eligible and would wish to be considered for purchase of one of the affordable homes.

In addition to these developments a number of other projects are being progressed which will provide a range of housing opportunities for affordable rent and sale as well as houses for open market sale.

Developments in Ross & Cromarty

Muir of Ord, Logan Way

The Council has agreed to sell land at Logan Way to Albyn Housing Society. Part of the site is currently occupied by 4 chalets used as temporary accommodation for homeless people. The site will be developed by Albyn, along with an adjoining area, to provide a total of 34 houses and flats. 20 of these homes will be for affordable rent of which 4 will be made available to the Council for use as homeless accommodation, improving on the accommodation offered by the existing chalets. 10 of the completed properties will be offered for sale under the Homestake initiative.

Inchvannie Court, Dingwall

12 flats have recently been completed at Inchvannie Court. The flats have been developed by Albyn Housing Society. This development provides twelve 1 and 2 bedroom flats for rent and for homeownership under the Homestake initiative.



Tain, Scotsburn Road

The Council has agreed to sell a site capable of providing up to 80 houses to the Highland Housing Alliance. An overall master plan has been prepared for the site which allocates areas for a range of housing opportunities, including affordable rent and homeownership and sites for self build. The Alliance has now started to market a first phase of 12 plots, targeted to people either living locally or who have a reason to move to Tain. This first phase of development will provide an opportunity for new development within a controlled development thus reducing pressure to allow development of sites on unallocated land in the neighbouring countryside.

Strathpeffer

The Highland Housing Alliance and Albyn Housing Society are working together in the development of a site to the north of the primary school, formerly owned by the Council. This development will provide up to 26 affordable homes for rent and Homestake and 12 plots for private development. It is expected that roads and servicing works will commence on site within the next 2 months with plots being available for purchase towards the end of the summer. It is planned that construction of the affordable housing will begin on site later this year.

Conon Bridge Old School

Albyn Housing Society are about to let a contract which will result in the provision of 13 flats and houses on the site of the former primary school in School Road. This site was sold to Albyn by the Council. The project has been the subject of extensive consultation with the community through the Community Council and a local residents group.

Invergordon, Cromlet Park

Albyn Housing Society plans to start on a site in late spring at Cromlet where 25 new affordable homes will be provided. This is the first new affordable housing to be provided in the town for several years. Further sites are being investigated which will provide houses for rent and affordable homeownership.

Poolewe

Five new 2 and 3 bedroom homes for affordable rent at Clifton, Poolewe are due for completion in May. These houses are being provided by Albyn Housing Society on a site secured by the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust. The Council is currently considering a planning application by Albyn who hope to build a further 8 houses for Homestake on a nearby site.

The Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust (HSCHT)

The HSCHT is a Scottish Charity that was set up in 1998 by the Highland Council in partnership with all the key players concerned with the lack of affordable housing in the Highland's rural communities. The other key players are the local Housing Associations, the two main crofting and landowner organisations, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Communities Scotland (formerly Scottish Homes) and last – but by no means least – the communities themselves through their Community Councils.

What does the Trust do?

The Trust gives practical help to communities which have housing related problems by:

- Meeting with their Community Councils to discuss and advise on local housing issues
- Carrying out (free) housing needs surveys etc for them
- Agreeing local housing action plans with them to meet the identified needs
- Identifying and buying suitable plots for affordable housing provision
- Buying houses to assist incoming key workers
- Acting locally in ways agreed with the Community Councils.

The Trust also liaises closely with all its main partners to advise them on local housing problems and to secure their support and investment for the affordable housing provision required. It has helped over 140 communities the length and breadth of the Highland Council area, has so far landbanked 25 sites, sold on many of them for rented housing and plots and it carries out over 20 housing needs surveys a year.



Rented housing in Applecross provided by Albyn Housing Society on land provided by The Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust.

Why does the Trust buy land?

Because it is the best way of guaranteeing that the community will get the kind of affordable housing that it requires, the Trust buys land to provide two main kinds of housing opportunities:

- Rented housing to be built by the local housing associations (which, therefore, are not subject to the “right to buy”).
- House plots for local people who aspire to build and own their own homes but who could not afford to do so without the availability of a reasonably priced plot and, usually a Rural Home Ownership Grant (available from Communities Scotland).

The Trust attaches pre-emption right conditions (called “Rural Housing Burden”) to every plot it sells to ensure that the plot and the house subsequently built on it remain affordable for years to come to subsequent local purchasers.

HSCHT Contacts

The Trust's main office is at 5 Ardross Terrace, Inverness IV3 5NQ.

Telephone: 01463 233548 or 233549. Fax: 01463 233549.

Email: di.alexander@hscht.co.uk or kate.dunbar@hscht.co.uk

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 information about the Highland Housing Alliance, see:-
Development Matters - Issue 2 (November 2005)*

Update on Homestake (A shared equity scheme for low cost home ownership)

Cairn Housing Association Ltd and Albyn Housing Society Ltd have appointed Angela Kay as the Homestake contact for both Housing Associations.

Angela can be phoned on 01349 855991 or email her at enquiries@homestakehighland.com
Her address is: Homestake Highland, 98-100 High Street, Invergordon IV18 0DL.

Further information about [Homestake](#) is available from the Communities Scotland website and in our last News Report - [Development Matters - Issue 2 \(November 2005\)](#)

Other News in brief

Dalneigh Hostel, Inverness

Dalneigh Hostel was built 40 years ago to house Inverness College students but it has been lying empty for some time and became a frequent target for vandals. William Gray Construction purchased the site in 2005 and has entered into contract with Cairn Housing Association to build 33 flats for rent and 10 flats for shared equity (Homestake), with construction is due to start in Spring 2006.

MacLennan Crescent, Inverness

MacLennan Crescent in Merkinch has been changed dramatically in a partnership project with Albyn Housing Society. The Council has remodelled the housing on one side of the street to provide 8 houses and 16 flats, with the ground floor flats being wheelchair adaptable.

Working in partnership with Albyn Housing Society the original flats on the other side of the street were demolished and 35 new homes have been built on this mixed tenure development. There are 13 homes available for rent, with 6 flats sold at a discount and a further 16 homes are being sold as shared ownership.

This has brought tenure diversification into the neighbourhood to create a balanced community.

Housing Options in the Highlands – new leaflet available

The Highland Council has produced a new leaflet which provides information about the range of housing options that are available throughout the Highlands, including rented housing and low cost home ownership.

Please click on the leaflet to view an online version.

The leaflet is available at all Council Service Points and has also been provided to Community Councils. Alternatively, please contact the Housing Development team if you would like a copy to be posted to you (please see contact details below).



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)