

From:
Subject:

West Highlands and Islands Local Development Plan
FW: West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan [#347]

Section Alan & Wendy Richmond

**1: Your
personal
and
contact
details**

1.1

Name *

1.2 Are a member of the public
you? *

Select a Tell us your vision for the area
topic to
comment
on

4.1 How do you want the West Highland and Islands area to change over the next 10–20 years?

Re. East Sleat.

Tourism: As stated in the previous paragraphs, Sleat has changed dramatically over the past years and if we are not extremely careful Skye and Sleat in particular will lose what is the most profitable area, that being tourism. People come to Skye to see areas totally different to where they live and the beauty that greets them when they embark from the ferry, in our minds cannot be replicated anywhere. If we lose this with over exuberant planners, then we have lost everything that Skye represents and the tourists will take their money elsewhere. The road from Armadale to Teangue is outstanding and full of scenic beauty and even the dualing of the A851 has not distracted from this, but further development anywhere along this road will surely take away what the visitors come to see and that is wild open landscapes. One of the biggest attractions and a rarity in the U.K. is the dark sky at night and this will be destroyed by any further development, bringing more light pollution into the area. This valuable and unique asset is clearly underestimated by the Highland Council and Planners.

Crofting: Already in previous planning good quality crofting land has been taken over by developers. Local farmers are having to fight to retain land that they have used for years, but unfortunately large estate owners have the power to sell whatever and wherever they choose and the planners are not considering the environment when issuing

permission to build. When we first came to live on Skye 9 years ago, we had corncrakes in the fields around us and raptors swooping down in the fields in front of us. That land has now been taken over by developers and the wildlife has gone. Surely the relatively high quality of croft and farm land on the coastal margin should be taken into account when consideration is given to development.

Drainage: As previously mentioned many houses have been built in Teangue since we came here and we own an area of approximately 2 acres of land which is now totally waterlogged, due to the excessive building on the land above us. As waste water is only by septic tank in our area, we can only assume the drainage has totally changed since we first came here and that can only be because of the extra water being discharged above us on the hillside and natural drainage channels being altered. If building is going to continue then this issue must be addressed by the planners as there must be other areas affected similarly. When we have heavy rain the A851 is flooded at several points along the road, where it is draining down the hillside. The more houses that are built on the hillside the more water will pour down! It is noted that the previous plan stated that 'landscape impact and slope stability were key factors in the decision not to proceed with site options north west of Knock Farm' but this has obviously not been applied.

Commercial Interest: We cannot see why any commercial interest should be developed in the area of Sleat, when existing empty commercial premises and areas that are not fully utilised exist in Broadford. It cannot surely be feasible to transport any type of commercial enterprise such long distances, before reaching the main connecting roads to i.e. Glasgow/Inverness. In winter obviously the ferry as a means of transport cannot be relied upon, due to adverse weather conditions. Therefore, the cost and feasibility of transport would discourage any commercial enterprise from basing themselves in Sleat. It is clearly not good economic business sense to locate in such an area and would therefore if proceeded with, be yet another waste of good land having unused development on it.

4.4 How can these assets and characteristics best be safeguarded, improved or used to provide economic or community growth?

Summary of reasoning for comments–

It is suggested that any future developments should take place in areas where reasonably good transport links are already in existence, for example, Broadford where it is only a short distance to the Skye Bridge and when the new hospital is built, there will be a better infrastructure to support future commercial and social development. As Broadford is already the central hub for the south area of Skye, then this makes economical and environmental sense, therefore protecting the area known as 'the garden of Skye' and preserving the heritage of previous generations, ensuring that tourism and the financial input provided by it continues to support Skye.

Before any housing or commercial development is planned, the question must be answered as to whether it is really

required, as once it is built there is no going back and the mistakes have to be lived with by the people in the area concerned forever.

Question 1. Who are going to live in the properties? Local residents, second home owners, or holiday rental owners.

Question 2. What employment will be available to them in Sleat?

Question 3. How can businesses be expected to locate to this area, given the long distances involved and the cost of transportation?

If these questions cannot be answered satisfactorily and agreed by the local community then planning should not be approved.
