

THE WEST HIGHLAND AND ISLANDS LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY MILLER DEVELOPMENTS
ON BEHALF OF LOCHEIL ESTATES AND OATRIDGE LTD
(REPRESENTTEE NO. 947)

STATEMENT OF FURTHER INFORMATION

**HEARING 1 - THE ALLEGED OVER-PROVISION OF LAND ALLOCATED
FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN FORT WILLIAM**

Miller Developments Ltd acts on behalf of Locheil Estates and Oatridge Ltd (Representtee no. 947) in respect of their representations to the draft West Highlands & Islands Local Plan. Although we do not wish to appear in person at the hearing listed above, the following statement should be read as confirmation of our views on the above issue.

This statement has been prepared by Colin Graham MA(Hons) DipSurv MRTPI, Development Manager at Miller Developments, 2 Lochside View, Edinburgh EH12 9DH. Reference is made in the Statement to one of The Highland Council's core documents, namely:-

THC 2: West Highlands and Islands Local Plan: Deposit Draft: THC:
December 2008

**Hearing 1 – The Alleged Over-Provision Of Land Allocated For Housing
Development In Fort William**

THC 2 allocates the Blar Mhor site for a variety of uses including housing. An indicative capacity of 300 units is given but the final scale, type and configuration of any housing on the site will be dependent on the outcome of the developer's master-planning process, and on any infrastructure constraints identified during this process.

The master-planning process has only just commenced on the Blar Mhor site, with an initial pre-application meeting with The Highland Council scheduled for 22 December 2009 and full public consultation to start in early 2010.

We note Tim Stott's (Principal Planner with The Highland Council) comments in respect of this issue, as set out in The Highland Council's Statement of Further Information on Hearing 1, and broadly concur with his conclusions on Subjects 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6. We further note the constraints THC believe may affect housing proposals on the Blar Mhor site, namely Physical, Marketability, Infrastructure and Heritage. Ultimately, these constraints will be dealt with through the proper master-planning process above as due process dictates

but our experience leads us to believe that none of these are sufficient to warrant the site's exclusion from THC 2.

It would be premature to pre-judge the outcome of the ongoing master-planning process, although we are mindful that a certain quantum of development will inevitably be required in order to ensure that the up-front infrastructure required to unlock the Blar Mhor site is deliverable. However, bearing in mind the historic housing take-up rates for the Fort William area, we may be prepared to discuss some flexibility with THC in respect of the overall housing number for the Blar Mhor allocation so long as this: a) helps support viable housing land values elsewhere in the local area; and b) does not impinge upon the viability of the MU5 release.

Conclusion

We support the Council's allocation of Blar Mhor as a substantial housing site for Fort William but are willing to discuss a potential reduction in the overall housing number with THC once initial investigations into the site's infrastructure requirements are complete.