

Welcome to the fifteenth edition of Development Matters, the newsletter from The Highland Council's Housing Development Team, part of Development and Infrastructure Service. This newsletter is designed to promote awareness by providing information about housing development activity in the Highlands.

Partnership Working: Highland Housing Hub

The Council has set up a Highland Hub where Officers from the Council, Scottish Government and key housing associations and other partners meet on a weekly basis to identify and deliver key projects in the Highlands. The Hub is based at the Council to enable close working with planners, road engineers and other services to try and unlock constrained sites. The Council's in-house surveyors also take on a proactive site identification role and the Scottish Government is keen to provide funding for key strategic site acquisitions to build up a land bank portfolio.

The Scottish Government recently announced that they are going to invest £3billion to deliver 50,000 new affordable units over the next five years. The new target is a 67% increase in affordable housing supply with 70% of the new target being for social rent. The Scottish Government also announced that it has exceeded its existing five year target of 30,000 new affordable houses.

Partnership Working

The construction of 37 new homes at **Dalmore, Alness** was completed in July 2016. This project was carried out in partnership between Albyn Housing Society and The Highland Council to provide 10 new homes for LIFT, 12 new homes for Albyn Housing's mid-market rent and 15 new homes for The Highland Council. These new homes were built by O'Brien Properties, Dingwall with a total project cost of £4.6m and grant from The Scottish Government of £1.4m.



These new homes were designed by Bracewell Stirling Architects and are highly energy efficient with mains gas central heating and highly insulated walls. Careful consideration was also given to long term maintenance with regards windows, doors, cladding to name but a few. This site benefits from an open layout with large amounts of landscaped areas, we have received very positive

comments from residents as well as many external organisations for the overall feel of this new site. This project was an important first phase of a much larger site owned by Albyn Housing which has outline planning approval for 200 new homes.

Assisted Living/FIT Homes: Working in partnership with Carbon Dynamic and NHS Highland, Albyn Housing Society are set to commence an innovative project this August, which follows on from the successful pilot project of modular, one-bedroomed properties at Alness, Kendal Court (completed units image right and during factory construction below).



The first phase of FIT Homes, which will include 14 new homes, is planned for Albyn Housing Society's new site at Dalmore, Alness as outlined above. A further 32 houses, including homes for veterans, will be built in Inverness and the surrounding area.

The innovative homes are constructed off-site by Carbon Dynamic and delivered to their location for final completion. The central concept of the homes is that they will include ambient, physiological and building sensors to collect data that can be monitored and responded to by a variety of agencies – potentially transforming the way health and social care is delivered.



The partnership's FIT Homes project aims to develop a new sustainable home design for residents with long-term health and care needs who want to live independently at home. The first of its kind in the UK, the initiative will take input from a wide variety of stakeholders including patients, clinicians, service providers, potential tenants and the wider community. As part of the consultation, the Alness Academy pupils recently had the chance to view the current design and layout using virtual reality technology, enabling them to experience the space in 3D (pictured right with representatives from Carbon Dynamic, NHS and Albyn).



Part of the Scottish Funding Council's innovation centre programme, the Digital Health and Care Institute is supporting the project, which will also deliver invaluable research into the health economics of the FIT Homes concept. For more information about Albyn Housing Society visit www.albynhousing.org.uk/ for more information about Carbon Dynamic visit www.carbondynamic.com or <https://vimeo.com/156689908>

Inverness, Westercraigs: this large tri-party development saw collaborative working between THC, HHA and Caledonia Housing Association to deliver nearly 100 new homes, including mid-market rent, social rent and shared equity. Situated in the highly popular area, demand for the homes was high. Delivered by Robertson Homes and designed by local company Colin Armstrong Architects, it was only the collaborative working partnership that allowed the complex arrangement to proceed. The end result is a fantastic development with well-built homes (pictured right).





Work on **Phase 6, Home Farm, Portree** completed in mid June 2015 (pictured left). This development was designed specifically on the basis of a multi- agency partnership approach involving The Highland Council, Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association, NHS Highland, Ross-Shire Woman's Aid and Police Scotland. This project has been a unique collaboration comprising 31 homes for affordable rent: 4 cottage flats for the Council; 23 for the Housing

Association; a bespoke, specially adapted bungalow for NHS Highland providing a core special needs unit for two clients with complex needs as well as a live-in carer. In addition, a large family home for Ross-shire's Women's Aid on an Agency Agreement and a new hostel for Police Scotland provided accommodation for eight officers. A new dental clinic comprising three dental surgeries was also built within this phase of Home Farm.



Inverness, Merkinch Welfare Hall - Fit for the Future: a partnership between Merkinch Enterprise, Inverness City Amateur Boxing Club, The Highland Council and the Scottish Government has enabled the only listed former temperance hall in the Highlands to be restored and brought back into use. The project has brought together different funding streams from HIE, Inverness City Heritage Trust, The Architectural Heritage Fund, Robertson Trust, the Heritage Lottery Fund, The Highland Council and the Scottish Government. Works are well under way to create space for the boxing club and offices for the Merkinch Partnership, and are due to complete in December 2016. Construction work is being carried out by MacGregor Construction and the lead consultant architect is LDN Architects. Pupils from Merkinch Primary School have been working on a time capsule which will be filled with objects and buried later this year. Visitors will be able to view works, as the project is included in the Doors Open Day on 10 September. More details are available via www.highland.gov.uk. A photography group (please see images to the left) has been set up to record the project throughout its entirety: http://www.merkinchwelfarehall.org.uk/community_activities/the_gallery.php

Bringing Affordable Housing Home

Council House Build Programme

The Council has a target to work with the Scottish Government, Housing Associations and the private sector to deliver 5000 new homes by 2017. This target includes at least 888 new council houses and other affordable homes.

The Housing Development team, part of Development and Infrastructure Services, work collaboratively with partner agencies to deliver affordable housing throughout the Highlands.

Locally based partners include Albyn Housing Society, Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association, The Highland Housing Alliance and The Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust. The Council also work with national organisations, such as Caledonia Housing Association and Cairn Housing. Housing associations delivered almost all the new affordable housing built between 1996 until 2010 when the Council took up a direct development role; whilst still retaining its enabling role.

The Housing Development Team has identified a broad range of new opportunities, allowing development of projects to meet one or more of our key drivers which are to build appropriate, local, sustainable, adaptable

and attractive homes for our communities. The following are brief summaries of some of the new council house projects either on site or recently completed.

Fort William, Tweeddale:



Works are in progress for the regeneration of Tweeddale House, Fort William which will offer 22 units of town centre flats, some of which will benefit from stunning views over Loch Linnhe and Loch Eil. The Council is investing £2.9million in the project which is anticipated to complete in January 2017. The contractor is Robertson's Construction and the architect is The Highland Council's Design Consultancy.

Inverness, Huntly House: this challenging project involved the demolition of the former homeless hostel accommodation (see image below) and is preserving two neighbouring listed buildings. The 20 units for council housing will be ready for occupation in February 2017. The project further reinforces the regeneration of the river frontage and streetscaping. The contractor is William Gray Construction and the architect is Archial Norr. Pictured right are works in progress, courtesy of William Gray Construction.



Pictured above; former Huntly House Hotel (left) which was demolished to make way for the former Huntly House (right).

Invergordon, former Victoria Garage High Street: This development is on site, is due to complete in August 2017 and will offer 19 units of council flats and bungalows. This scheme is regenerating a former garage site which has been derelict for some time. The contractor is O'Brien's Properties Ltd and the architect is Trevor Black. Included within the works are improvements to the traffic light controlled junction at the site entrance, and the inclusion of an off-road pedestrian route across the site to connect to the pedestrian network off neighbouring Wyvis Court. Please see image overleaf detailing the architect's drawing of the development.



Dingwall Gospel Hall, Gladstone Avenue: The Council is regenerating the former Gospel Hall in Dingwall to provide 4 council flats which are due to complete in October 2016. The contractor is O'Brien's Properties Ltd and the architect is Bracewell Stirling. Works have included improvements to local drainage infrastructure. The images below show works in progress and the architect's drawing of the finished flats.



Muir of Ord Former Urray House: The site of the Council's former Urray House care home in Muir of Ord is under regeneration to provide a mixed tenure development of 23 units which are scheduled to complete in June 2017. The contractor is Bells Contracts and the architect is Les Hutt. The site will offer a mixture of bungalows, family homes and flats and will provide two houses and four flats to be sold under the Scottish Government's LIFT Scheme (Low Cost Home Ownership). Pictured to the right is the architect's drawing for completed units.

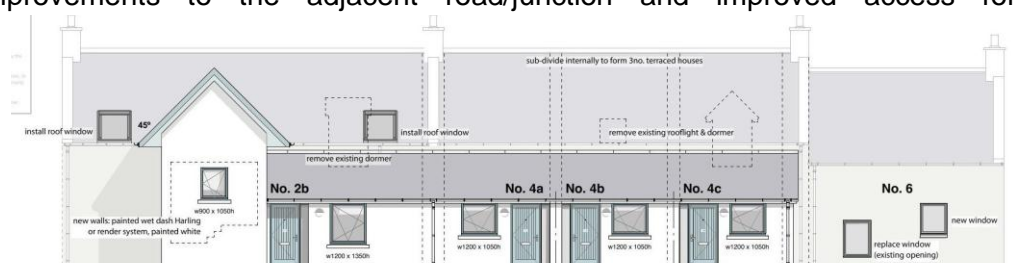


The site has been carefully designed to give the wheelchair units direct access to the new neighbouring care home, should access/services be required by tenants. Public access to the leisure ground beyond the site and been retained and enhanced. For more information about the LIFT Scheme, please contact Albyn Enterprises on: 01463 701271, email: LIFT@albyn-enterprises.co.uk; www.albynhousing.org.uk/our_housing/low_cost_ownership_options



Alness, Novar Road: This development of six units is on site and is due to complete in February 2017. The existing building is under renovation; having previously housed the Citizen's Advice Bureau, a neighbouring shop and flat, and will now offer four houses and two flats for council tenants. The contractor is Simpson's Builders and the architect is Iain Livesley. Work includes improvements to the adjacent road/junction and improved access for

neighbouring properties. Some interesting history has been uncovered as the build



has progressed (see image overleaf) and the Council collaborated with the local heritage group to record, preserve, and display the finds. Also pictured overleaf is the architect's drawing for the completed units.

End of Right to Buy

The Right to Buy ended for all Scottish council and housing association tenants on 31 July 2016. It is estimated that around half a million houses have been purchased in Scotland in the years between 1980 and 2016. During this time, 163,000 new houses were built, thus effectively for each new house built, three were sold. The Council can now protect its own stock for future generations and continue to plan future investment to deliver new social housing to help meet the Council's target to deliver 888 new council houses and other affordable homes, together with the Scottish Government's target of 50,000 new affordable units.

Update from Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association



The Association acted as an Agent on behalf of The Highland Council in the construction of 8 properties for affordable rent in Balmacara. The development completed in January 2016.

At Harrapool, Broadford, the Association is providing Clerk of Works services to The Highland Council for their 12 flats for affordable rent. This development completed in August 2016.



In addition, The Highland Council has appointed the Association as Development Agents for an 8-flat affordable housing development at Dunvegan Road, Portree, which is scheduled for completion on 31 October

The Association is also acting as Development Agents for the demolition of the former Broadford House and rebuilding of Strath House, comprising 11 flats for affordable rent which are due for completion in Summer 2017.



Update from the Highlands Small Community Housing Trust



Lochaber Housing Association New Developments: The Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust (HSCHT) has been working as Development Agent on behalf of Lochaber Housing Association on an ambitious development programme, that will introduce 120 new housing units over 4 years.

Kilchoan – Three new 2 bedroom properties are nearing completion in the village of Kilchoan, to be made available for social rent. Constructed

by local contractor S & K MacDonald Homes, the modern and spacious homes are to be handed over to the new tenants at the end of August. These will be the first new homes delivered by Lochaber Housing Association in a number of years

Fort William, Belhaven – Originally the site of the old Belhaven Ward, this project is a joint venture between the Highland Council and Lochaber Housing Association. The demolition of the ward itself is now complete, and development of the new properties has now started on site. This project was designed by Reynolds Architecture, and is to be constructed by RE Campbell Joinery. This project will see 8 Social Rent flats being developed for LHA, as well as 5 special-needs houses for The Highland Council and are due to be completed by June 2017.

Fort William, Heathercroft and Lochside – Both of these sites are underway and progressing well. Each is being built by RE Campbell Joinery. Heathercroft will provide 21 units in total (17 LHA Social Rent flats, and 4 LHA LIFT Semi-detached houses) while Lochside will provide 10 units (8 LHA Social Rent flats, and 2 LHA LIFT semi-detached houses). Lochside is due to complete in September 2016 while Heathercroft will follow in May 2017.



Strontian – LHA is working alongside HSCHT to develop new properties in the area of Strontian. Designed by Rural Design Architects, and constructed by James Macqueen Builders, HSCHT are developing 3 homes through their Rent To Buy Scheme, while 3 new LHA Social Rent properties are also being built. The homes are on target to be handed over in December 2016.

Upcoming Projects – Other projects upcoming in Lochaber Housing Association's ambitious Development Programme include developments in Duror, Lochside School, Upper Achintore and Mallaig. Duror is a joint project with HSCHT, who will be developing 2 units through their third phase of the Rent To Buy Scheme, while 4 properties will also be built by S & K MacDonald Homes for LHA. The Lochside School site is currently undergoing a masterplanning exercise with Bracewell Stirling Consultants. The Highland Council and LHA are working together on this, with the aim of delivering up to 60 new properties. In Mallaig, LHA and HSCHT are working alongside Nevis Estates on a project which aims to deliver a mix of affordable housing and private plots.



Rent to Buy Scheme (RTBS) The Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust has continued to provide new affordable properties around the Highlands, through their Rent To Buy Scheme. A combination of loan funding from the Scottish Government and The Highland Council has provided a development loan which will be repaid on the sale of the homes, and will be cost neutral to the public purse. The RTBS aims to help people who are on modest incomes to

become home owners in rural communities by returning a "cash-back" loyalty sum to the tenant at the end of their five year rental period if they purchase the property. The sum is used for the deposit required to secure a traditional mortgage. Other benefits are that the house price is set now and if house prices increase they will not have to pay any more and the prices are typically 20% below current market values.

HSCHT are about to start the development of their third phase of Rent To Buy properties. The second phase saw the completion of new affordable properties in communities such as Acharacle, Auldearn, Balmacara, Dornoch, Invergarry and Inverarnie. In total, we now have 27 completed Rent To Buy homes around the Highlands, providing affordable homes to individuals and families in rural communities, with a few other homes due to be complete in the near future under our second phase in communities such as Flodigarry, Gorthleck, Mallaig and Strontian.



The first of the third phase of Rent To Buy properties are already complete, with 4 homes in Aviemore, and 1 in Balmacara already being occupied by tenants. A further 19 homes are set to be developed in rural Highland communities such as Auldearn, Cromdale, Duror, Edderton, Flodigarry, Foyers, Gairloch, Kilbeg, Kinlochleven and Lochaline.

Highland Self Build Loan Fund (HSBLF): The Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust is now acting as agent for the Scottish Government, administrating their new Highland Self Build Loan Fund. They are now accepting applications, which can be downloaded from hscht.co.uk/highland-self-build-loan-fund.

This new £4million fund aims to help self-builders around the Highlands build their own homes. Many mortgage lenders are unable to provide financial assistance to self-builders, and this is where the fund aims to help. By providing applicants with up to £150,000 to reach completion stage of their build, the Highland Self Build Loan Fund should help families and individuals to complete their new home, and get to a point where they are able to access a traditional mortgage through any of the traditional lenders.

Launched in April 2016, the fund has been helping people build their own homes in different parts of the Highlands. There has been a large amount of interest in the fund, and the first of these projects which have benefitted from the HSBLF is due to be complete within the next couple of months.

For further information on the any of these initiatives please contact The Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust, 7 Ardross Terrace, Inverness, IV3 5NQ, Tel: (01463) 233549, email: info@hscht.co.uk or website: www.hscht.co.uk

Cairn Housing Association

cairn

Cairn Housing Association recently took handover of eight new-build apartments located in the wooded grounds of Hedgefield House on Culduthel Road in Inverness from its development partner Tulloch Homes.



The Cairn HA properties form part of the overall re-development of the house and grounds into nine luxury apartments in the Grade B listed historic building and thirty six new-build apartments for private sale by Tulloch Homes and eight apartments offered at affordable rents by Cairn.

Accessed by a tree-lined drive, the development has been carefully designed to produce a fully integrated mixed tenure scheme in this idyllic setting just a short walk from Inverness city centre. The rented properties were procured under a design and build contract with Tulloch Homes and the apartments are designed in accordance with Cairn's Development Brief and Specification.

The apartment building is of traditional construction and the Scottish Government contributed almost £500,000 grant funding towards the construction cost of the project which Cairn topped up with additional private finance. All apartments have been successfully allocated and the new tenants are settling well into their new homes. For further information about Cairn's new build development programme please contact Simon Campbell, Cairn's Property Investment Coordinator on 0800 990 3405 or simon.campbell@cairnha.com. www.cairnha.com.

Inverness, Academy Street (pictured right): this City Centre project saw the demolition of an existing building and the creation of 31 one and two bedroom apartments. The project was delivered jointly by The Highland Council and Highland Housing Alliance – this saw delivery of both social rented homes along with the successful National Housing Trust Mid-Market Rent. The Contractor was Ark Estates and the architect was Keppies.



Kiltarlity (pictured left): this development is delivering various tenures including housing association rent, NHT mid-market rent and THC social rent. The next phase will deliver ten council houses and ten NHT units which are anticipated to be ready early September. The Contractor is Ark Estates and the architect is Keppies.

The next phase at **Dingwall North** will create nine new council houses, in addition to the first phase of 22 which provided both social and mid-market rent homes. The site commands impressive views across Dingwall from what was a challenging site to develop. The Contractor is O'Brien Properties and the architect is Bracewell Stirling.

Inverness, Balvonie Green (pictured right) has benefitted from six new mid-market rent homes developed under the National Housing Trust initiative. Demand was high for the homes and they fit in superbly within the development which was Scotland's Housing Expo. This phase was built by local builders, Compass Construction and the architect was Bracewell Stirling.



National Housing Trust (NHT) is a Scottish Government initiative specifically targeted at people in employment, who are unable to raise the finance at present to purchase a house on the open market because of funding shortages. However, the intention of the initiative is to enable home ownership in the future as tenants will be able to buy the homes they are allocated within a specific timescale.

For further information about any of the Alliance's housing developments please register via the website www.highlandhousingalliance.com or contact tel: 01463 251132 or email the Alliance: info@highlandhousingalliance.com

Future Opportunities

Inverness, Raining's Stairs: designs are underway by William Gray Construction for flats to be developed on a challenging site at Raining's Stairs, Inverness. This prime development site could offer up to 18 new flats for affordable housing in the heart of Inverness. A full consultation will take place in the near future.



Ardgay Regeneration of former Lady Ross Hotel: an ambitious plan to redevelop a derelict site in the centre of Ardgay village is on its way. This is a significant redevelopment opportunity in Ardgay, located on a prominent site at the entrance to the village and to the County of Sutherland. The project will contribute to wider area economic regeneration by complimenting future private and community sector investment. The project involves the demolition of the vacant and derelict Lady Ross Hotel to create a landscaped village centre, four affordable homes and two affordable house plots. A planning application has been submitted and environmental surveys are underway, significant progress is expected in next few months. For more information, please contact Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust www.kyleofsutherland.co.uk 01863 766 554 or development@kyleofsutherland.co.uk



Other development sites in the indicative programme are Dingwall, Achany Road; Ullapool, Glenfield Hotel; Inverness, Glendoe Terrace and Inverness, Midmills.

And Last But Not Least...

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

If so, please contact:

Allan Maguire, Head of Development & Regeneration

Development and Infrastructure

The Highland Council

Glenurquhart Road

Inverness IV3 5NX

Tel:(01463) 702528

Email: allan.maguire@highland.gov.uk



Have you any comments or questions to be covered in future issues?

If so, please write to the Housing Development team, Development and Infrastructure, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX or send an email to Sarah.James-Gaukroger@highland.gov.uk (Tel: 01463 702831)