



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

24 August 2020

To whom it may concern,

Application from Glengarry Community Woodland

Having been impressed by the plans to take Forestry Land Scotland land at Ardoch Forest into community ownership, I write in support of Glengarry Community Woodland's application.

So many Highland communities have already demonstrated the benefits of community ownership – taking control of key local assets to shape their future.

One of the most exciting aspects of this project is the vision to have woodland crofts and also affordable community housing in an area battling depopulation, and I am pleased to see that the GCW team have been working closely already with the appropriate bodies such as the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust.

The new crofts and affordable house plots proposed by the community will balance the distribution of housing in Glengarry more evenly, ensuring that local needs can be met.

By giving the community control of their allocation through the standard crofts allocation procedure, and the Rural Housing Burden allocation criteria, this will help the community to tackle local housing needs. People who are employed seasonally in tourist businesses could also benefit from having a croft to support their livelihoods.

The project will create opportunities for people who work locally with average household incomes but cannot afford to live locally. This is especially important for people working in public services, as well as the primary school, filling station, and post office.

By building additional housing capacity which is reserved for full-time local residents, the project also supports the needs of expanding local businesses.

Housing, and particularly the lack of affordable homes, is the number one most common issue raised with me in my role as constituency MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch – so I would commend this exciting and joined-up approach.

Though consultation with the local community has been harder to do during the pandemic, GCW have done their best to consult with the local community – and the feedback indicates significant buy-in and sharing of the vision.

I am confident that the new homes delivered by this project will support Glengarry to become a better-connected community in which social networks are stronger, and families can live near each other to provide support or childcare.

I underline that building new homes is critical for the future of this community, and I fully commend the work of the GCW.

This is one of the most exciting initiatives taking place in Glengarry and I hope you can look positively upon this application.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Forbes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kate Forbes MSP
Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch