

Dornie & District Community Council
c/o Seallach Tuath
Caroline Street
Dornie
By Kyle
Ross-shire
IV40 8EH

29 January 2013

Dave Thomson MSP
Thorfin House
Bridgend Business Park
Dingwall
IV15 9SL

Dear Mr Thomson

Affordable housing in rural areas

- **Rural Homes Ownership Grant**
- **Crofting House Grant Scheme**

Recently, Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association and the Highland Council completed the second phase of a development of affordable housing in the village of Dornie. At the announcement of the funding for this phase, the community council wrote to the Scottish Minister for Housing asking that priority be given to young, local people as the communities in our district are at risk of becoming unsustainable due to out-migration of younger people; and in-migration of older people.

We were very pleased that the two housing providers took our concerns seriously and did much to promote the criterion of 'need for residency in Dornie' with the result that at least two young families have been allocated housing.

However, we remain concerned that this development does not fully address the housing needs of young people and we are writing to urge you to lobby within government for the re-introduction of the Rural Homes Ownership Grant scheme for first time builders. There are a number of families in the area who benefited from this scheme, and with the contraction in availability of mortgage finance and the limited budgets for affordable housing, it is a significant loss.

We would also ask that you ensure that the Crofting House Grant Scheme is made more user-friendly and accessible to applicants. We have been disappointed to read of the challenges facing applicants to the Scheme and would urge you to investigate this matter and encourage civil servants to clarify their criteria for eligibility and their understanding of the nature of crofting.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Shona MacLennan
Chairman
Dornie & District Community Council

Cc: Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association
The Highland Council