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Sent: 24 January 2008 10:27
To: Smith B (Becky)
Subject: Firm Foundations Consultation Response

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Hi there,

Please find attached a consultation response to the Firm Foundations paper from Alasdair Allan MSP. <<Letter to Stewart re- Firm Foundations Consultation.doc>>

Many thanks,

Alan Masterton

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25/02/2008

ALASDAIR ALLAN

MSP for the Western Isles - BPA airson nan Eilean an Iar

Stewart Maxwell MSP
Minister for Communities
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

Ref: AM/358
24th January 2008

Dear Minister,

I wish to make a brief submission to your consultation on Firm Foundations, which draws on the impressions of the distinct housing problems of this constituency, and in particular on meetings I have held with some of those most directly involved in the housing sector in the islands. It therefore incorporates some views which are those organisations' own.

The first comment I should make is that Firm Foundations has met with a broad welcome among those involved in housing in the islands. In particular measures such as the support on offer to housing associations and the ending of the right to buy on new council houses provide incentives for us to tackle the unacceptable shortage of affordable housing in areas like the Western Isles, where many hundreds are waiting to be housed.

This note concentrates on one or two of the areas that have been flagged up to me locally which I hope the Government will give consideration to. Firstly, I was reassured at today's meeting of the Local Government and Communities Committee to hear from the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing that, although the private rented sector is an important part of the Government's strategy to achieve housing growth, this policy will be applied in a way that takes account of local needs. Like some parts of Lanarkshire, I believe, the Western Isles is an example of a community where the private rented sector is virtually non-existent.

The most immediate issue that has been raised with me locally is the proposal to have one developer per "area" for new housing. There is an appreciation of the need to secure best value, but it would be useful to know how large such

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ALASDAIR ALLAN

MSP for the Western Isles - BPA airson nan Eilean an Iar

areas would be in the context of rural Scotland. Local housing associations in Scotland's islands would, I know, be keen to ensure that decisions in this area are to be taken locally and not on the mainland.

These as I say are immediate issues that have been flagged up in a paper which has been widely welcomed.

I look forward to engaging with the Government's plans at a later stage on the committee.

Yours Sincerely,



Alasdair Allan MSP

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