



NEWS RELEASE

11th April 2008

SCOTTISH CROFTING FOUNDATION LAUNCHES HOUSING REPORT

The Scottish Crofting Foundation (SCF) has this week launched its report on meeting housing needs in the crofting areas, 'Houses on Crofting Land'. The research has been carried out by Derek Logie of the Rural Housing Service, one of Scotland's leading experts on rural housing, with the intention of finding methods whereby crofting land could help to meet the need for affordable housing in Highland and Island communities, while safeguarding crofting interests.

SCF Chief Executive Patrick Krause said, "In some areas there is intense pressure on crofting land for housing, as can be seen from the decrofting applications in the press every week. All too often these applications are for the wrong kind of housing – speculative, high cost and beyond the means of local young families and key workers in the community. The key to affordable housing is affordable land and we wanted to find ways that crofters, with their valuable land resource, could play a role in providing much needed housing in their communities. The use of poorer land on common grazings is a way of achieving this, and Derek Logie's report outlines a number of routes for crofting communities to follow should they wish to make land available. In its new programme 'Growing Crofting Communities' SCF will be assisting townships to progress their own development needs including affordable housing."

The report was produced with the assistance of Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Crofters Commission, Highland Council, Argyll and Bute Council and Tighean Innse Gall (Rural Community Housing Pilot).

Meantime SCF has called for a further detailed evaluation of the Croft House Grant Scheme and the reintroduction of the loan element. SCF Vice-chair Hugh Donaldson said, "The croft housing grant and loan scheme was recognised as giving the best value for public money in rural housing provision. Failure to develop the scheme and proof it against inflation, along with the loss of the loan element, has left it massively devalued. The credit squeeze makes it even harder for crofters with low, irregular and seasonal incomes to raise the finance for housing. The old loan and grant scheme made house building affordable and gave young working people the chance to remain in their communities. It also provided work for local trades people in remote communities. In light of the stated objective of giving more people, more opportunities to benefit from crofting tenure we would urge the Scottish Government to restore it to its former value. Further we believe the scheme and its benefits should be extended to those of similar status to crofters and the necessary cross departmental funding mechanisms found to enable the scheme to deliver its potential."

The 'Houses on Crofting Land' report is available at www.croftingfoundation.co.uk/index.php/publications/66

Ends.

Contacts: -

Patrick Krause
Hugh Donaldson

01599 566387
01967 431815

07739 941199
07880 553989