**17/02523/FUL | Erection of 40 bedroom care home, Ness Road Fortrose**

13th October 2017

To Members of NPAC

Item 5.6 of the NPAC meeting of 17th October is the determination of the above application. The handling report from the planning department recommends refusal of the application. In exercising our duty to represent the extremely strong support for the development in our Community we would ask that every member of the NPAC vote against this recommendation and that the application be approved. The reasons for refusal given in the handling report may best be described as tenuous and are far outweighed by the employment opportunities offered and the needs for additional care home facilities in the area.

The Reasons for the planners recommending refusal and the reasons why we believe their judgement to be in error are appended.



Dr.T.V.Heath

For Fortrose and Rosemarkie Community Council

Craigburn

20 Canonbury Terrace

Fortrose IV10 8TT

01381 620 377

07786 392 917

anisotropics@btinternet.com

Appendix:

**Rebuttal of Handling report**

**17/02523/FUL | Erection of 40 bedroom care home, Ness Road Fortrose**

*13.1* *The proposal is contrary to the aims and objectives of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan which seeks to protect and maintain the distinct identities of Fortrose and Rosemarkie. The siting of the development on the proposed site would result in a significant intrusion of built development into a green wedge which clearly serves to provide a significant visual and physical break between the built environment of the two villages.*

The Inner Moray Firth Local development describes the maintenance of the “green wedge” between Fortrose and Rosemarkie as “desirable” not “mandatory”. The overwhelming community view is that the intrusion into the “green wedge” would be insignificant. The benefits in terms of local employment and the possibility (albeit remote) of some local people being able to stay close to their community are however considered to more than justify this intrusion. As part of their concern regarding the “green wedge” the Community Council has already sought and received assurances from the planning department that granting this application would not set a precedent for future applications.

*13.2 The proposal is contrary to Policy 36 (Development in the Wider Countryside) of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan as it is out of keeping with the existing pattern of development. The site lies outwith the Settlement Development Area of Fortrose as defined in the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (adopted 2015).*

In discussions between senior Planning Officials and this Community Council the Officials agreed that it was extremely unlikely that a care home could ever be built on land allocate for development. This is because the value of land for house building exceeds the value for building a care home. The Highland Councils has resisted any attempt to allocate land specifically for a care home which means that, If the argument of 13.2 is consistently upheld, then it is unlikely that a care home will ever be built on the Black Isle. This is not acceptable.

*13.3 The proposal is contrary to the Policy 36 (Development in the Wider countryside of the Highland- wide Local Development Plan as it would result in the introduction of a dominant and incongruous development , the location, scale and massing of which would have a significant detrimental impact on the landscape and visual character of the area.*

In quoting Policy 36 The planners are being extremely selective in its application. The Ness Gap development opposite the proposed Care Home Development is far more out of keeping with the landscape and visual character of the area. In comparison to this the impact of the Care Home is irrelevant.

*13.4 The proposal is contrary to the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan and Policy 35 Housing in the Countryside (Hinterland Areas) of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan as the site is located outwith the identified Settlement Development Area for Fortrose and is within the Hinterland designation which protects areas of countryside where there is pressure for development.*

The development is actually small by comparison to the multiplicity of small housing developments which have been allowed across the Black Isle so that again there appears to have been a selective application of Policy 35.

*13.5 The proposal is contrary to Policy 55 (Peat and Soils) of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan and Scottish Plan Policy as it would result in the unjustifiable loss of prime agricultural land.*

The loss of agricultural land is extremely small compared to other local developments which have been supported by the planners and the view of the Community is that this minor loss is more than justified.

In summary whilst the planners have decided to act as though the maintenance of the Green wedge between Fortrose and Rosemarkie is mandatory according to the IMFLDP, it is no more than desirable. The local community feel overwhelmingly, for whatever reason, that the minor intrusion of the Care Home into the green wedge is irrelevant compared to the benefits of having the home. Discussions between this Community Council and Care Home providers in Scotland indicate that there will be no other proposals to build a care home in this area in the foreseeable future and we would therefore as you to represent our community and approve the application.