



PRESS RELEASE

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FIFE COUNCIL WARNED AGAINST REDUCING PLANNED HOUSING

Homes for Scotland warns that Fife's house prices will continue to rise, young people will be unable to enter the housing market and families will be prevented from buying homes in the places they wish to live if the proposed review of the Structure Plan for Fife reduces the amount of housing previously proposed for the region.

A report is due to be presented to the full council on August 16 seeking approval for an eight-week consultation period on re-appraisal of the plan before a final report is prepared for submission to Scottish Ministers in late 2007. The report will suggest that there may be an argument for planning for less growth than forecast by the Government's own statisticians.

Over-protection of land by local interest groups and political parties in Fife compares starkly with attitudes in Westminster and Holyrood. Prime Minister Gordon Brown, MP for Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath, has recognised that the UK is in the midst of a housing crisis and has announced his intention to see an increase in house production across the UK in order to meet current and future need. The new Scottish Communities Minister, Stewart Maxwell has asked Homes for Scotland to join a task force to look at how production figures can be doubled across Scotland, a country with one of the lowest build rates in Europe.



Allan Lundmark, Homes for Scotland's Planning Director said: "If Fife Council does reduce its housing target, not only would it be out of line with the current consensus on housing, but it would also contradict its own stated objectives of attracting employment, encouraging regeneration, providing affordable housing and creating economic growth for the region.

"Essential new homes must be built responsibly and sustainably in the places local people need them most. If Councillors back track on the Structure Plan, house prices will go through the roof, young families will have no way of gaining entry to the housing market and Housing Associations will be unable to afford to build as price competition for available sites will be fierce.

"Depute Leader of the Administration Elizabeth Riches is quite right that the structure plan is crucial for the future of Fife over the next 20 years and we must get it right. Fife cannot fulfil its true potential and meet the current and future needs of its population unless there is a positive attitude towards planning and development. Homebuilders stand ready to work with the council and local communities to shape dynamic and sustainable communities of which Fife can be proud."

For further information please contact:

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