

**Press Release – Link Group 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

## **Handovers start at stunning state-of-the-art Fort William housing development**

The first ten homes in a 'truly transformative' housing development in Fort William have been handed over.

The development, a partnership between Link Group, the Scottish Government, and The Highland Council, in Upper Achintore, will see 82 semi-detached and terraced houses, bungalows and cottage flats built as part of a 300-home masterplan development.

The first ten properties were handed over on Friday, December 1. The first phase of development will comprise 55 Social Rent properties, 19 Mid-Market Rent, and 8 homes for purchase through the New Supply Shared Equity scheme (NSSE), one of the many options the Scottish Government operates to assist those on moderate to low incomes with owning their own homes.

Buying through a shared equity scheme means you pay for the majority share of the property – usually through a combination of deposit and mortgage – and the Scottish Government provides funding for the remaining share. The Scottish Government holds its share under 'a shared equity agreement', which is repaid either by increasing your share over time or when the property is sold.

Colin Culross, Link Group Commercial Director and Managing Director of C~urb, said: "I am delighted the first new modern homes of this truly transformative housing development are now complete.

"These houses will help people and families stay in Fort William, which will be a real boost to the town, as it will mean jobs will remain in the area, businesses will thrive, and those living in these new homes can enjoy a fantastic new home in this picturesque part of Scotland.

"The development of these new homes has only been possible with the support and funding from the Scottish Government and The Highland Council, who worked with a collective vision and positive partnership ethos. I am also grateful for the support and assistance from the contractor, JR Construction, and subcontractors TSL Construction and Capstone Construction, who have worked on-site since early 2022."

Housing Minister Paul McLennan said: "A warm, safe and affordable home improves our health, our wellbeing, our life chances and our job prospects. Link Group are playing a valuable role in delivering these outcomes by providing 82 high quality, energy efficient homes in Fort William, that I was delighted to see in the summer, supported with £11.9 million of Scottish Government funding.

Increasing housing supply is a key pillar of Housing to 2040, that will also help alleviate fuel poverty and reduce homelessness. In delivering high quality developments like this one in

Fort William, we are also contributing to essential services, creating communities and providing access to green space and I welcome these new affordable houses.”

The Highland Council’s Housing and Property Committee Chair, Cllr Glynis Campbell Sinclair, said: “Affordable and accessible housing is a key priority in the Council’s Programme and the Upper Achintore development is a prime example of how we can reinvigorate and make positive changes to increase the much needed housing stock in the Fort William area. Working in partnership with housing associations and commercial property developers to offer affordable social rent, mid-market properties and homes for purchase demonstrates our commitment to sustaining communities in the Highlands.

“Despite a buoyant economy and tourism market in the Lochaber area, retention and recruitment of staff is a problem due to a lack of suitable housing and can inhibit the economic growth potential of an area, however developments such as this and other Fort William housing projects will help with housing availability.

“The Highland Council, alongside our partners will continue to work to build a portfolio of housing stock to enable people to have viable options available to them and we look forward with optimism to see the developments complete and for the opportunities that these new homes will offer.”

The eight shared equity houses for sale comprise four, 2-bedroom and four 3-bedroom houses valued at £175,000 (buyer contributions between £105,000 and £140,000) and £205,000 (buyer contributions between £123,000 and £164,000), respectively and are now open for reservations.

Completions are scheduled for March 2024 for the 19 Mid-Market Rent and 8 Shared Equity properties, providing a perfect opportunity for first-time buyers to get onto the property ladder. The remaining 45 social rent properties will be handed over in phases from April 2024, until completion in June 2024.

Once the development is complete, a section of Connichie Road will be renamed Neil Clark Way. Neil Clark devoted his life to Fort William Shinty Club, raising funds and helping the club reach the top tier of the sport. He was an engineer for 30 years until his retirement and was a councillor for both Lochaber District Council, serving as Chairman from 1993 to 1996, and The Highland Council, standing down in 2007.

The NSSE homes were released for sale on Thursday, November 30. For more information and to register for the Upper Achintore mailing list for NSSE properties, please visit: [Link Housing – Upper Achintore, Fort William](#)