

INFORMATION SENT TO KCC 29/11/11 FROM KEN JOHNSTON, CHAIRMAN, LOCHABER DISABILITY ACCESS PANEL.

The Disability Access Panel has made the following observations to The Highland Council, in response to the following Planning Application:

**11/03567/MSC : Retail Supermarket, Petrol Filling Station, roads and car parking at Blar Mhor, Fort William**

The Panel examined this application and noted that it referred to a request for approval of detailed matters pursuant to conditions 2, 4 and 18 as attached to the grant of planning permission in principle ref 10/2634.

In general terms the Panel was supportive of this development. However, it is clearly the biggest thing in Lochaber in the last decade and it is imperative that the resultant development is enabling and inclusive. It was very difficult for the Panel to interpret the A4 plans and it is felt that this needs to be addressed.

Condition 2

The Panel had no comment in respect of condition 2.

Condition 4

In regard to condition 4 the Panel had the following comments:-

1. The siting is unfortunate in that the entrance faces directly south-west, straight into the strongest and most regularly prevailing wind force. No account appears to have been taken of the climatic conditions and no shelter planting or screening is to be provided. This wind force is extremely powerful and will make for very uncomfortable and distressing conditions for customers in general but in particular for disabled and elderly persons. Consideration should be given to re-orienting it to the south-east elevation.
2. Public transport infrastructure - no account appears to have been taken of the principal service bus routes. The only buses that pass on the A830 are the Sheil Buses Mallaig and Ardnamurchan services and the Citylink Mallaig service. It is absolutely vital that, as with the nearby Health Centre development, the developers ensure that the principal local services (Upper Achintore-Plantation-town centre-Claggan-Inverlochy-Caol-Corpach) are expanded to link with the Blar Mhor development. This may require an initial subsidy but without this link the vast majority of disabled and elderly local people, who depend on public transport, will be unable to gain access to the development - and all this at a time when the bus companies are committed to introducing accessible buses.
3. The bus timetables also need to be co-ordinated with other services and the bus bays should comply with current Transport Scotland Best Practice design.
4. The bus halts are very distant from the entrance - 100m or more. Consideration should be given to routing the service closer to the entrance.
5. No details are given of the floor plan or internal layout - entrance doorways (are they to be motion-sensored, do they have good strong colour contrasts) or foyers (are they spacious, where are the disabled trolleys to be located?)
6. Signage should be provided to the accessible parking bays.

7. Accessible parking bays - 20 of the 388 bays are to be disabled bays - meeting the Highland Council's 5% level of provision. National standards are now 8% and the Panel would strongly request that this level be provided and, further, that the 6 bays on the SE elevation should be provided with 1200mm rear access safety zones. Additional parking could be provided by relocating the P&T bays.

8. Drop off bay - this is likely to be well used by customers dropping off disabled family members, wheelchair users, and others with mobility difficulties. It is essential that the whole of this kerb edge is a dropped kerb flush (or max 6mm) with the road surface and also the surface should be yellow-chevroned and signed accordingly.

9. Location of bollards must give regard to disabled and wheelchair access

10. Footpath Links and Dropped Kerbs - no details of these are given other than that they will be "barrier free". What will the surfacing comprise of, and what is the width? The Panel is keen to comment on the provision and location of dropped kerbs

11. The petrol filling station should include a bell system for disabled customers to request assistance; and a section of the counter should be lowered.

#### Condition 18

The Panel, for its remit, had no comments on this.