hebridean housing partnership

Making our house your home

ITEM NO 3.1

HEBRIDEAN HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Board

Minutes of Meeting held remotely via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 17 November 2020 @ 2.30pm

ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES		
1	**Attendance & Apologies**	
	Present	Staff & Consultants In Attendance
	Iain Macmillan (Chair)	Dena Macleod (Chief Executive)
	Calum Mackay (Vice-Chair)	Anna Coyle (Company Secretary)
	Alasdair Mackenzie	John Maciver (Director of Operations)
	Norman A Macdonald	Donald Macleod (Director of Finance & Corporate Services)
	Fiona Macleod	Iona France (Governance Officer – Minute Taker)
	Gordon Macleod	Jonathan Fairgrieve (Corporate Services Officer)
	Roddy Nicolson	Katia Petteloot (Finance Manager)
	Paul Finnegan	Katrina Rowlands (Development Manager)
	Roddy Mackay	Garry Campbell (Debt Management Officer)
		Tina Cook (Training & Development Officer)
		Angus MacNeil (Assets & Contracts Manager)
		Peter O'Donnell (Investment Manager)
		Monika Fortagh (Debt Management Officer)
	Apologies	
	Alex Gardner	
	The Chair, on behalf of the Board, expressed condolences to Mr Gardner following his recent bereavement.	
PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL MATTERS		
2	**Declaration of Interest** No declarations of interest were made.	
3.1.1	**Minute of Board Meeting 26 August 2020** **The minute of the Board meeting of 26 August 2020 was submitted and approved as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of the meeting.**	
3.1.2	**Minute of Board Meeting 27 August 2020** Calum Mackay nominated Gordon Macleod as second substitute member on the Investment Delivery Board. **The minute of the Board meeting of 27 August 2020 was submitted and approved as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of the meeting.**	
3.2	**Action Sheet** There was no further update to the report. **The Action Sheet was noted.**	
4	**Date of Next Meeting** The date of the next meeting will be 27 January 2021.	
5	**Health & Safety** Board Members were advised of an incident on a Development Site and further detail would be provided at Item 9.7	

	ITEMS FOR DECISION
6.1	**<u>Business Plan 2020 Update</u>** The Chief Executive presented the progress report on the Delivery Plan for the Business Plan 2019/20 to 2023/24 which was approved in August 2020 and took account of the COVID-19 measures and the increased funding to deliver the Comhairle's revised Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP). A Business Planning session for January 2021 was proposed, prior to a further review, once a confirmed funding facility is in place. The Chief Executive advised good progress was being made on the majority of the measures of success. The Delivery Plan Progress Report to 30 September 2020 outlined where we are not achieving our targets, largely due to the impact of the measures the Government has put in place, and the steps we are taking to address these. The Chief Executive confirmed the current office arrangements would remain in place until at least 31 March 2021. **The Board:** **a) reviewed the Delivery Plan Progress report to 30 Sept 2020; and** **b) noted the action being taken to address areas where targets are not being met.**
6.2	**<u>Digital Transformation Strategy</u>** The Digital Transformation Strategy was presented for consideration and approval. Implementation of the Digital Transformation Strategy would ensure we deliver our first strategic goal – placing tenants at the centre of everything we do. The Strategy outlined our plans for the next three years, in line with our current Business Plan, using digital technology to transform the way we deliver our services. The Strategy will have a positive impact for tenants with increased engagement and satisfaction being two key outcomes. Norman Macdonald highlighted the potential challenges associated with the demographics of our tenants, the importance of a robust a back-up system and resilience within the system. The Director of Finance & Corporate Services agreed there was a need to take into account those service users who may not have access to internet or 4G technology. The consultation document would establish if, and how, tenants and other service users access the internet. The Chief Executive suggested that Board Members should consider how homes might look in 10 years to enable us to plan for future technological requirements. Mr Macmillan suggested younger people, who will be the tenants of the future, should also be consulted. The Head of Executive Office confirmed work will be taking place, in conjunction with e-Sgoil and senior secondary school pupils to determine their vision on the future of technology within social housing, as part of the development of the SQA housing qualification we are involved with. The Director of Finance & Corporate Service confirmed the requirement for an additional post to deliver the Strategy within the agreed timescales and the Chair requested when the post is filled; the Board further consider the outcomes of the consultation. **The Board approved:** **a) the Digital Transformation Strategy for consultation with tenants; and** **b) if there were no material changes to the Strategy arising from consultation, that the Strategy be approved, otherwise a revised Strategy would be presented to the next meeting of the Board.**
6.3	**<u>Model Rules Implementation Report</u>** The Company Secretary presented a revised set of Rules (the "2020 Rules") for approval to present to the Membership at a Special General Meeting for consideration and approval. The SFHA Charitable Model Rules 2020 were a revision of the 2015 Model Rules, adopted by HHP in 2017. The adopted 2017 Rules included of a series of HHP specific amendments, on which we took advice from Harper Macleod. These amendments were approved by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) subject to the Comhairle's consent to the proposed changes, Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) at the time, and have been maintained in the 2020 update. The updated Model Rules 2020 were produced in conjunction with SFHA membership, and approved by SHR, OSCR and the FCA. HHP revised Rules contained: • the updates to the Model Rules 2020; • the previous HHP amendments; and • the implementation of a previous decision from the Special General Meeting (SGM), held in November 2017 regarding the constitution of the Board.

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The report also sought approval for a SGM to be convened for the Membership to discuss and vote on the adoption of the 2020 Rules. It was proposed to hold this remotely on Wednesday, 9 December 2020 at 2.00pm.
The Chief Executive advised the proposed changes to the make-up of the Board were primarily to satisfy the Regulator the Board were meeting the Governance regulatory standard and in particular on the skills required and action to meet any skills gaps.
The Chief Executive further advised of the response from Mr Malcolm Burr, CNES. Mr Burr indicated his intention to inform the Communities & Housing Committee of the proposed Rule changes on Monday, 1 December 2020 and would inform the Chief Executive of the outcome of the meeting. Mr Burr indicated the proposed changes would likely be politically controversial.
Fiona Macleod agreed that 4 Board appointed members would provide the opportunity for other agencies to be represented on the Board, for example, health agencies or young people.
Roddy Mackay suggested that the geographical limits be removed from the tenant member category to provide flexibility.
Norman Macdonald stated the role of the Council Members on the Board, since stock transfer, was to provide a link between local government and HHP to deliver the Strategic Housing Investment Programme and partnership working at an officer level should be replicated at Board level.
Mr Macmillan agreed that further discussions were required with the Comhairle on the proposed changes and whilst we would continue to work in partnership, our first responsibility was to tenants.
The Board:
a) approved the draft of the 2020 Rules to go before the Membership, subject to any final amendments provided these are not material in nature;
b) approved the geographical limit be removed from tenant member category;
c) noted the proposed changes to the Rules;
d) approved the calling of a Special General Meeting on 9 December 2020 to allow the Membership to discuss and vote on the updated 2020 Rules; and
e) noted the Chief Executive had written to Malcolm Burr at the Comhairle to advise of this update and provided a copy of this report and the draft 2020 Rules. Mr Burr's response was also noted.
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<u>Annual Assurance Statement</u>
The Annual Assurance Statement (AAS) was presented for consideration and approval. The AAS was approved by the Board on 26 August 2020, subject to further guidance from the Regulator.
The guidance received from the Regulator confirmed the necessity for landlords and Governing Bodies to understand the extent to which their ability to deliver services and to comply with regulatory requirements had been affected by COVID-19 and, in particular, the full range of new risks and issues for tenants and other services users. The deadline for submission to the Regulator of the AAS was extended from 31 October 2020 to 30 November 2020.
An AAS scrutiny session was held earlier in the day to allow Board Members to review the evidence checklist and ensure compliance with the requirements of the AAS.
The Chair commended staff for the work undertaken to collate the evidence checklist and demonstrate how it satisfied the requirements of the Regulatory Framework.
The Board approved the:
a) Annual Assurance Statement; and
b) Annual Assurance Statement – Evidence Checklist
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<tr><td>6.5</td><td>
<u>Board Skills Assessment & Board Training Plan</u>
The report advised on the outcome of the Board Skills Assessment carried out in September 2020 and detailed a Training Plan based on Board Members' responses.
The report also sought approval for delegation to be given to the Chair and Chief Executive to finalise the 2020 Board Development Plan following the Development Session, due to be held in December 2020.
The Board:
a) approved the Draft Board Training Plan;
b) agreed a further development session led by the Chair before the end of 2020; and
c) delegated responsibility for finalising the 2020/21 Board Development Plan to the Chair and Chief Executive.
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<u>Gas Audit</u>
The Investment Manager presented a report on the Gas Audit carried out in October 2020.
The 2020 Audit concluded contractor performance had improved significantly and no gas safety issues were highlighted, however, documentation performance had slipped. Independent verification software was being evaluated to improve the performance in this area.
The report also proposed future Gas Audits revert to a 2-year cycle with the next audit carried out in 2022. This will be reviewed if concerns are identified or if circumstances change.
The Board:
a) agreed the Gas Audit should revert to a 2 yearly cycle; and
b) noted the report.
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<tr><td>6.7</td><td>
<u>Energy Efficiency & Preferred Supplier</u>
This report informed the Board on the energy efficiency requirements of the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing post-2020 (EESSH2).
The Investment Manager advised compliance with EESSH2 was required by 2032 with a formal review in 2025, which will include Air Quality and Environmental Impact assessments.
It was proposed the preparation for compliance be examined and evaluated at the next Business Planning Day and by the Asset Management Working Group, with regular reports brought to the Board.
The report also sought approval to appoint Utilita as the preferred electrical supplier for all voids and new build developments. The previous preferred supplier, Our Power, were taken over by Uitlita, and their void process remained the same. Other suppliers were approached however, no other supplier responded positively to the request.
The Board:
a) noted the requirements to achieve compliance with the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing post 2020;
b) noted that the Asset Management Working Group will examine and evaluate EESSH2 compliance; and
c) approved the appointment of Utilita as preferred electrical supplier for void and new build properties.
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<tr><td>6.8</td><td>
<u>Development Monitoring Report</u>
The Development Manager advised the Board of the progress with the Five Year Development Plan 2020-2025 and the Scottish Government funding period 2018-2021. Progress was going well on most sites, however, there had been some slippage at Goathill and Tarbert and completions would now be achieved in 2021/22. The resumption at Barvas is due to complete in January 2021 so approval was being sought for the development to be brought forward to 2020/21.
Planning permission for the Low Flyer, Balivanich had been received earlier in the day and discussions were being held with contractor on a date for a site start.
The developments at Tolsta, Breasclete and Mackenzie Avenue had all completed. Torlum and Winfield Close developments were due to complete on the week ending 20 November 2020, representing the completion of our 500th home. Arrangements were being made to mark this milestone.
The tender return for Cleit, Barra was due on 18 November 2020 with the scoring taking place the week beginning 23 November 2020.
The Board:
a) approved the Barvas development be brought forward to the 2020/21 financial year;
b) noted the development spend update as at 30 September 2020;
c) noted the development progress report;
d) noted the overview of developments;
e) approved the new development at South Dell be named Sealladh Beinn Dail;
f) approved the new development at Low Flyer, Balivanich be named Johnstone Court.
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<tr><td>6.9</td><td>
<u>Budget Timetable & Strategy 2021/22</u>
The Budget Timetable 2020/21 was presented for consideration and approval, including rent consultation.
A meeting of the Finance Working Group was scheduled for 23 November 2020 to discuss the rent consultation and the funding facility.
The Board approved the 2021/22 Budget Strategy, including the Budget Timetable.
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6.10	**<u>Community Grants</u>** The Board were asked to consider a funding application from the Sandwick Hall & Recreational Association for £1,000 from the Community Grant Fund. Our Community Grant Fund makes funding available to support small scale community projects which will improve the quality of life for residents and make a difference to neighbourhoods. There must be a benefit to our tenants residing within the area. The Sandwick Hall & Recreational Association propose to use the grant to create a safe walking route between Mackenzie Park and the community facilities at Sandwick Hall. This will have a direct benefit to our tenants in Mackenzie Park. Permission was also sought to construct the path through our site at Melbost Farm. This would be a temporary arrangement until construction starts and a formal route would be provided at that time as part of the development. **The Board approved the funding application from the Sandwick Hall & Recreational Association.**

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">POLICIES FOR APPROVAL</th></tr>
<tr><td>7.1</td><td><u>Recruitment Policy</u>
The Recruitment Policy was presented for approval to consult with staff & Unison.
The Policy had been updated to take into account best practice recommended by Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH) and the key changes proposed were:
• Exit Interviews to be carried out by Managers rather than Executive Team;
• Inclusion of a separate statement on ‘Positive Action’;
• Timescale added for requesting feedback on an interview; and
• Monitoring review timeframe.
The Board approved:
a) the Recruitment Policy for consultation with staff and Unison; and
b) if there were no material changes to the Policy arising from consultation, the Policy be approved, otherwise a revised Policy would be presented at the next meeting of the Board.</td></tr>
<tr><td>7.2</td><td><u>Training & Development Policy</u>
The Training & Development Policy was presented for approval to consult with staff & Unison.
The updated Policy takes into account the changes within the Partnership, post Pay & Grading review, and the key changes proposed were:
• inclusion of the Training & Development Officer and Head of Executive Office roles;
• inclusion of the online HR system;
• update of the Employee Appraisal Process;
• extension of the length of time an employee will be liable to repay the fees paid by the Partnership towards professional, vocational or further education qualifications from 12 to 36 months, with the exception of a Graduate Trainee position, which will be written off after 12 months; and
• update of the learning opportunities for young people to include all trainee posts and to remove the upper age limit for Modern Apprentices.
The Board approved:
a) the Training & Development Policy for consultation with staff and Unison; and
b) if there were no material changes to the Policy arising from consultation, the Policy be approved, otherwise a revised Policy would be presented at the next meeting of the Board.</td></tr>
<tr><td>7.3</td><td><u>Stress Management Policy</u>
The Stress Management Policy was presented for approval to consult with staff & Unison.
The Policy had been updated to take into account best practice recommended by EVH and the key changes proposed were:
• inclusion of Health & Safety Executive (HSE) Stress Management Standards;
• revision of Policy aims;
• expansion of confidentiality of information and Data Protection;
• expansion on proactive and reactive measures adopted to manage stress; and
• specific reference to occupational health & counselling service.
The Board approved:
a) the Stress Management for consultation with staff and Unison; and
b) if there were no material changes to the Policy arising from consultation, the Policy be approved, otherwise a revised Policy would be presented at the next meeting of the Board.</td></tr>
<tr><td>7.4</td><td><u>New & Expectant Mothers Policy</u>
The New & Expectant Policy was presented to the Board for approval to consult with staff & Unison.
There were no material changes to the Policy.
The Board approved:
a) the New & Expectant Mothers Policy for consultation with staff and Unison; and
b) if there were no material changes to the Policy arising from consultation, the Policy be approved, otherwise a revised Policy would be presented at the next meeting of the Board.</td></tr>
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7.5	**<u>Policy Review (Safeguarding)</u>** The report updated the Board regarding the compliance of our Safeguarding Policies with OSCR guidance. **The Board noted the review of policies in respect of Safeguarding.**
7.6	**<u>Policy Consultation Response</u>** Members were updated of the outcome of the recent consultations with Staff and the Union with regards to the Alcohol & Drugs Policy. There was a minor amendment to the definition section of the Policy for clarity. **The Board approved the Alcohol & Drugs Policy.**

MONITORING & UPDATE REPORTS	
8.1	**<u>Management Report to 30 September 2020</u>** The Finance Manager presented the Management Report to 30 September 2020. Members were advised most areas were significantly below budget due to COVID-19 however, this had been factored into the forecast outturns. Repairs, Investment and Development Programmes had progressed well in the second quarter. The Investment Programme was expected to be delivered on time, with the possible exception of windows and doors. Restrictions due to COVID-19 had resulted in slippage in development, which would result in a reduction in forecasted rental income of £56K. Saving of £72K had been reflected in the forecast out-turn. These included savings in premises costs, general consultant fees and furniture and fittings. The latter two were due to postponing the office re-design and space planning exercise. **The Board noted the Management Report as at 30 September 2020.**
8.2	**<u>Quarterly Treasury Report to 30 September 2020</u>** The Director of Finance & Corporate Services detailed the Treasury Management activities for the second quarter of 2020/21. The Annual Financing Strategy (AFS) forecast £14.805M would be drawn down from our approved borrowing facility in 2020/21. The Board approved a 30 year Business Plan on 18 March 2020 which showed the requirement to draw down the remaining borrowing facility in the first half of 2020/21. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the Development Programme being halted and a revision to the phasing of the drawdown of the remaining loan facility. No additional borrowing would be drawn down in 2020/21. Financial covenants were forecast to be met for 2020/21. **The Board noted the:** **a) quarterly report on the Analysis of Investment and Borrowing;** **b) outstanding loans at 30 September 2020 of £4.910 Million; and** **c) cash balance at 30 September 2020 of £6.969 Million.**
8.3	**<u>Investment Programme Monitoring Report</u>** The Assets & Contracts Manager presented an update on the procurement and progress of the 2020/21 Investment Programme and advised there had been some movement since the writing of the report. Bathrooms and showers were progressing well with the first couple of schemes completed. The installation of smoke detectors was ahead of programme and would be completed within the legislation deadline. There had been significant supply chain issues for Air Source Heat Pumps with the next delivery not due until March 2021 and work was ongoing to source alternative suppliers. The delays were primarily due to the lockdown measures in the central belt. This could result in an underspend in the heating programme of up to £1M. There has been little interest from contractors for the tenders for the installation of windows in Lewis & Harris and there had been no returns for the rewiring works in Lewis. Following an enquiry from Calum Mackay, the Assets & Contracts Manager confirmed potential price rises - had been flagged by contractors and suppliers. Mr Macmillan requested the Asset Management Working Group monitor these issues. **The Board noted the:** **a) progress on the Investment Programme; and** **b) update on the provision of Aids & Adaptations.**
8.4	**<u>Board Plan 2021</u>** The report outlined the plan for items to be considered by Board during 2021. **The Board noted the Board Plan 2021.**
MEETING WENT INTO PRIVATE SESSION	

Chairperson Mr Iain Macmillan

SIGNED ………………………………………………………

DATE ………………………………………………………