hebridean housing partnership

Making our house your home

ITEM NO 3

HEBRIDEAN HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Board

Minutes of Meeting held remotely via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, 17 March 2021

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">PRELIMINARY ITEM</th></tr>
<tr><td>Add Item</td><td><u>Appointment of Tenant Board Member</u>

The Board were asked to consider the appointment of a Tenant Member to our Board.

An application for Tenant Membership of the Partnership was received from Mr Peter Graham on 15 March 2021. Mr Graham also expressed an interest in joining the Board as a Tenant Member.

Mr Peter Graham's application for Membership of the Partnership had been assessed and approved by the Company Secretary under the delegation of Standing Order 4.1.

The Board:

a) approved Mr. Peter Graham's application to become a Tenant Board Member, subject to the satisfactory completion of the Code of Governance requirements and provision of a full candidate statement; and

b) noted the full review of Standing Orders to be completed in June 2021 will also provide for a skills and experience matrix to be completed for prospective Board Members.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td><u>Attendance & Apologies</u>

<u>Present</u>
Iain Macmillan (Chair)
Calum Mackay (Vice-Chair)
Roddy Mackay
Norman A Macdonald
Roddy Nicolson
Gordon Macleod
Fiona Macleod
Alex Gardner

<u>Staff & Consultants In Attendance</u>
Dena Macleod (Chief Executive)
Anna Coyle (Company Secretary
John Maciver (Director of Operations)
Donald Macleod (Director of Finance & Corporate Services)
Iona France (Governance Officer – Minute Taker)
Angus MacNeil (Assets & Contracts Manager)
Katia Petteloot (Finance Manager)
Sawan Morrison (Development Manager)
Tina Cook (Training & Development Officer)
Monika Fortagh (Debt Management Officer)
Angus Smith (Corporate Resources Manager)
Katrina Rowlands (Service Development Officer)
Peter O'Donnell (Investment Manager)
Donalda Mackinnon (Area Manager)
Jonathan Fairgrieve (Corporate Services Officer)

The Chair requested permission an additional late report be taken after Item 9.7. The Board agreed the inclusion of the late report.

The Chair requested delegation be given to the Chief Executive to fulfil the role of interim Company Secretary until such time as a replacement Company Secretary is appointed.

The Chair extended his thanks personally, and on behalf of the Board, to the outgoing Head of Executive Office/Company Secretary, Ms Anna Coyle, for her contribution to HHP and the Board through challenging times and wished her well for the next part of her career.</td></tr>
</table>

PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL MATTERS	
2	**Declaration of Interest** Calum Mackay declared an interest in Item 6.5.
3.1.1	**Minute of Board Meeting 27 January 2021** **The minute of the Board meeting of 27 January 2021 was submitted and approved as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of the meeting.**
3.2	**Action Sheet** The Chief Executive confirmed a replacement Council Board Member had been appointed, pending the completion of governance paperwork. **The Action Sheet was noted.**
4	**Date of Next Meeting** The date of the next meeting will be 19 May 2021.
5	**Health & Safety** The Director of Operations informed Members of a Health & Safety incident at the Goathill development. A report was awaited from the contractor and the Regulator had been notified. An update would be provided to Board Members when available.

	ITEMS FOR DECISION
6.1	**<u>Business Plan Timeline</u>** The Chief Executive presented a proposed timeline for the next review of our five year Business Plan (2019/20 – 2023/24) for approval. Proposed dates for the workshops would be circulated and the briefs were being prepared. Members were asked if there were any specific areas of discussion they would like to be included in the workshops to let the Chief Executive know. **The Board approved the approach to our Business Plan review.**
6.2	**<u>Budgets 2021/22</u>** The 2021/22 Budgets were presented for consideration and approval and were prepared based on a rent increase of 1.3% following tenant consultation. The final Budgets were presented to the Finance Working Group on 1 March 2021 to review and stress testing was carried out. The Director of Finance & Corporate Services advised that moving into Tier 4 on 30 January 2021 had a significant impact on the Investment budget with up to £2M works being carried forward to next year. The report also highlighted other material variances from the 2021/22 budgets. The Director of Finance & Corporate Services provided an update on RBS refinancing discussions and advised that an updated discussion document had been received the previous evening. Whilst there were still elements to be agreed it was anticipated that we would be in a position to accept terms in the next 2 to 3 weeks. An additional Board meeting would be convened at that time and following Board approval it was expected that the agreement would take 1 to 2 months to conclude. **The Board:** **a) approved the 2021/22 Budgets; and** **b) noted the Cash Planning Limits and 30 Year Cash Flow Statement.**
6.3	**<u>Fraud Checklist</u>** The Annual Fraud Checklist was presented for consideration and approval. The Director of Finance & Corporate Services informed members we were not able to confirm Item 6 on the Checklist as due to remote working arrangements, employees had access to systems at all times. However, the recent internal audit by Wylie & Bisset confirmed Internal IT controls are strong and recommendations have been made to strengthen an already robust controls environment. Employees and Managers will be reminded of their obligation to take 2 weeks consecutive holidays per year. **The Board reviewed and approved the Fraud Checklist.**
6.4	**<u>Development Programme 2020-25</u>** The report detailed the progress with the Five Year Development Plan 2020-2025 and the Scottish Government funding period 2018- 2021. The Director of Operations confirmed we expected to draw down £11M against an RPA of £9.7M which represented a significant additional grant drawn down and despite current restrictions the developments on site were all progressing well. **2021/22 Programme** There will be a carry forward of works on site of £5M into the next financial year. The Asset Management Working Group (AMWG) met on 11 March 2021 to discuss the priority sites for 2021/22. **Blackwater** – The land acquisition was still to be concluded but it was anticipated this will be finalised in April 2021 and will then progress to tender. **Crowlista** - The AMWG expressed concern at the level of demand for the proposed 4 house contractor led development as the waiting list for the area was very small. It was agreed at the AMWG meeting that a survey would be carried out to ascertain the level of demand. Subsequently a surveyed was issued on Monday 15 March 2021 through our social media pages and shared with the Uig Community Council and CNES. At the time of the meeting there had been 43 responses, from a mixture of household sizes. 23 respondents were from the Uig area with the remaining 20 from elsewhere. 36 respondents were interested in housing in Uig and the majority were interested in moving in the next 12 months. As the survey demonstrated a very clear demand for housing in the Uig area it was agreed to proceed with the development. Members agreed it was a very positive response in such a short time to the survey and highlighted the limitations of our waiting list. The Chief Executive confirmed that first Business Planning Workshop would discuss demand and how we assess it along with population demographics.

	North Lochs (Keose) – initially the proposal was for 4 houses on this site however, Planning Services would only approve houses. The AMWG agreed to tender for two properties as this was deemed more cost effective and the funding gap could potentially be met through savings on the tender. **Barvas** – It had been hoped that the acquisition of this developer led site would conclude prior to year-end, however, there was still outstanding legal issues so it was unlikely this would complete prior to 31 March 2021. **Cleat Road, Barra** - The land transaction was still to be concluded. The AMWG agreed additional funding of £11,887 to enable the site to progress. **The Board:** **a) noted the development spend update as at 31 January 2021, the development progress report and the overview of developments;** **b) agreed to extend the delegated authority of the Asset Management Working Group for a further 12 months;** **c) agreed the new development in Barvas, Isle of Lewis be named Gleann Mor;** **d) agreed the new development in Howmore, South Uist be named Ionad Mairi Bremner and;** **e) approved the development at Crowlista be progressed.**
6.5	**<u>Tenant Participation Development Services</u>** This report presented to the Board options for delivering effective Tenant Participation services to our tenants. The Tenant Participation Officer role was introduced in May 2015 and since them we have seen an increase in tenant engagement satisfaction measures. There was strong evidence that having a dedicated resource for tenant participation has directly improved our satisfaction scores. Given the increased satisfaction performance and the importance of the role in delivering the current Tenant Participation Strategy, it is proposed that the post is continued. The Executive Team have reviewed the options in detail and recommend outsourcing the role. It was further proposed the contract is tendered on the basis of a two year period with the option to extend for a further two years. The tender will be issued in March 2021 with a view to a contract start in May 2021. **The Board approved the:** **a) Tenant Participation Officer role continue and the procurement of the external delivery of the Tenant Participation Development Services; and** **b) tendering of the contract on a two year basis with the option to extend for a further two years.**
6.6	**<u>Allocation of Housing to Priority Homeless Applicants</u>** Board Members were advised of a request from the Comhairle's Housing Team to increase the proportion of vacancies being made to Statutory Homeless applicants in the Stornoway area and the wider political issue where the Housing Minister had written to RSLs to assist local authorities in addressing homelessness. The Director of Operations summarised the Comhairle's request for further assistance in progressing its Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, and to reduce the number of Priority Homeless applicants waiting on housing. They had requested a higher proportion of allocations in Stornoway as this is the area for which there is highest demand. To achieve this the Board were asked to consider increasing the percentage of allocations for 1 bedroom properties in Stornoway being made to statutory homeless applicants to 100% for a period of time e.g. 6 months. It was noted that this approach could result in little prospect of waiting list applicants on the 1 bedroom list receiving an offer of housing which could potentially increase homeless presentations. The Chair intimated that whilst there was desire to respond positively to a request to assist with homelessness, there was also a potential risk in presenting as homeless being the only route to being allocated a 1 bedroom property in Stornoway. There was a robust discussion on the reasons why people present as homeless, why preventing homelessness in the first place would be the preferred option and the apparent disconnect between CNES Housing Strategy and the Homeless Service requirements. It was agreed that there was a requirement to strike a balance between the fundamental human right to a home and not disadvantaging other housing applicants. To enable the Board to make an effective decision, and make a real difference to homelessness throughout the islands, it was agreed that a meeting with the CNES Housing Manager, Homeless Manager and representatives from the Integrated Joint Board (IJB) would provide a less formal forum to enable them to make a more informed decision. **The Board deferred the decision to increase the proportion of vacancies in Stornoway allocated to Statutory Homeless applicants until such time as further discussion was held with the CNES Housing Manager, Homeless Manager and representatives from Integration Joint Board (IJB).**

POLICIES FOR APPROVAL	
7.1	**<u>Repairs & Maintenance Policy</u>** The Repairs & Maintenance Policy was presented for consultation with tenants. The Policy had been updated to take into account the following: • new and updated Landlord Health and Safety requirements; • the Asset Management Working Group would review the lettable standard on an annual basis and scrutinise procedures and processes for rechargeable repairs; • alignment with the Domestic Abuse Policy stipulating that repairs will not be recharged to a tenant who was the victim of domestic abuse in that tenancy. **The Board approved:** **a) the Repairs & Maintenance Policy for consultation with tenants; 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.**
7.2	**<u>Procurement Policy & Strategy</u>** The updated Procurement Policy & Strategy were presented for approval. There were only minor updates to the Policy, primarily in relation to the UK implementation of former EU related procurement processes. **The Board:** **a) approved the revised Procurement Policy;** **b) noted the Procurement Plan for 2021/22;** **c) approved our updated Procurement Strategy 2021-2022 and performance measurement framework;** **d) noted the procurement performance for 2020; and** **e) noted the Contracts & Community Benefit Registers.**
7.3	**<u>Expenses Policies</u>** Following the annual review of the Members' & Staff Expenses Policies no changes were made as HMRC allowances remain unchanged since 2020. A guidance note has been issued to all staff to signpost them to The Government's Working From Home provisions. **The Board noted the review had been conducted with no changes required to the existing Policies.**
7.4	**<u>Corporate Payroll Policy</u>** The Corporate Payroll Policy was presented for consultation with staff and Unison. The Policy was updated with the Board's position on the UK Government's Furlough scheme and the inclusion of a Joint Consultative Committee for the purposes of agreeing the annual pay award. **The Board approved:** **a) the Corporate Payroll 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.**
7.5	**<u>Equality & Diversity Policy</u>** The Equality & Diversity Policy was presented for approval to consult with staff & Unison. The Policy had been renamed (previously Equal Opportunities Policy) and updated to take into account best practice recommended by Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH). Board Members and staff had recently undertaken Equalities & Diversity Training. An outline Action Plan for the implementation of the Policy had been circulated to all Teams for further discussion and feedback. **The Board approved:** **a) the Equality & Diversity 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.**

7.6	**Vaccine Policy** The views of the Remuneration Working Group (RWG) on the need for a Vaccine Policy and the granting of time off to staff to attend vaccine clinics were considered by the Board. The RWG reviewed a Vaccine Policy, based on a Croner model policy, and after some discussion agreed that it would be better to wait and see what the Government intends to do regarding vaccine passports before putting any policy in place. The RWG recommended time off to attend the vaccine clinic should be in line with other medical appointment **The Board agreed:** **a) it was too early to put a specific vaccine policy in place but this would be kept under review until the position of the Government is known; and** **b) in line with current arrangements for appointments, staff will be allowed to attend vaccine clinics during core time but they must clock out to do so.**

MONITORING & UPDATE REPORTS	
8.1	**Management Report** The Finance Manager presented the Management Report to 31 January 2021. As previously reported at Item 6.2, going into Tier 4 had a significant impact on the Investment Budget. The Development Budget was impacted by the 3 month lockdown from March 2020 however, since restrictions were lifted work was progressing well. **The Board noted the Management Report to 31 January 2021.**
8.2	**Investment Programme Monitoring Report** The Assets & Contracts Manager presented an update on the procurement and progress of the 2020/21 and 2021/22 Investment Programme. **2020/21 Programme** There had been very little significant change to the update given on 27 January 2021 due to Tier 4 restrictions. **2021/22 Programme** Tendering for 2021/22 Programme was well underway with a number of works procured the previous year on a 2 year programme. Following approval of the Budgets at Item 6.2 any works tendered and approved would be awarded. It was hoped if work was able to commence on 26 April 2021 the programme would be completed in the next financial year. **Aids & Adaptations** The Aids & Adaptations works were out to tender and there was an allocation in the budgets to allow a smooth transition to carry out the works prior to any Scottish Government grant being awarded. **The Board noted the:** **a) progress on the Investment Programme; and** **b) update on the provision of Aids & Adaptations.**
8.3	**Communication & Engagement Plan** The report presented a summary of recent online communication and engagement (website, press releases and social media) and provided an overview of proposed external communication for 2021. The report also provided figures on the level of engagement through various channels and the Head of Executive Office confirmed this information would be collected and reported to Board on a quarterly basis. The successful level of engagement with the Crowlista survey was noted and the Chief Executive thanked both the Uig Community Council and CNES for the work they did in ensuring the survey was shared widely. **The Board noted the:** **a) Communication and Engagement Performance Report; and** **b) outline plan for communication and engagement for 2021/22.**
8.4	**Housing Need & Demand Study** The Board agreed on 26 August 2020 to carry out a study of housing need and demand to inform the development of the next Business Plan and the Director of Operations confirmed the tender brief for consultancy work was being prepared, to be issued by end March 2021. The study will seek to establish information on housing need and demand within our various communities, at a local level, with a particular focus on affordable housing. The Director of Operations confirmed Members feedback would be welcomed on the expected outputs from the study, which were detailed in the report. **The Board noted the report.**
MEETING GOES INTO PRIVATE SESSION	

Chairperson Mr Iain Macmillan

SIGNED ……………………………………………………

DATE ……………………………………………………