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 Wednesday, 29 March 2023 at 5.30pm

PRELIMINARY ITEM		
ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES		
1	**Attendance & Apologies** Attendees Gordon Macleod (Chair) Calum Mackay (Vice-Chair) Alison MacCorquodale Donald Macsween Fiona Knape Helen Mackenzie Iain M Macleod Norman A Macdonald Apologies Alex Gardner Finlay Stewart Roddy Nicolson	Staff & Consultants In Attendance Dena Macleod (Chief Executive) Donald Macleod (Director of Finance & Corporate Services) John Maciver (Director of Operations) Jonathan Fairgrieve (Corporate Services Officer – Minute Taker) Iona France (Governance Officer) Angus Smith (Corporate Resources Manager) Donalda Mackinnon (Area Manager) James Morrison (Finance Manager) Katrina Rowlands (Service Development Manager) Michael Libby (Corporate Services Officer) Monika Fortagh (Debt Management Officer) Norma Robb (People Development Officer) Peter O'Donnell (Investment Manager) Sawan Morrison (Development Manager)
PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL MATTERS		
2	**Declaration of Interest** **Gordon Macleod declared an interest in item 6.5.** **Calum Mackay declared an interest in item 6.8.**	
3.1	**Minute of Board Meeting 8 February 2023** **The minute of the Board meeting of 8 February 2023 was submitted and approved as a true and accurate record.**	
3.2	**Action Sheet** The Chief Executive advised updates on actions in the private section of the Action Sheet would be taken in private. **The Action Sheet was noted.**	
4	**Date of Next Meeting** The Chair requested Members view be sought as to whether holding Board Meetings on a Tuesday would be better suited to members. **The date of the next meeting will be Tuesday 23 May 2023.**	
5	**Health & Safety** **Nothing to report.**	

	ITEMS FOR DECISION
6.1	**<u>Business Plan 2023 Update</u>** The Chief Executive presented the 2023 update of our five year Business Plan (2019/20 to 2023/24) for review and approval. Following consultation on key points within the plan, no responses had been received. The following changes had been made to the Plan: • The inclusion of the infra-red heating replacement programme; • References added relating to the Cost of Living Crisis; • An action plan on Damp & Mould; • The inclusion of the New Committee Structure; and • Significant changes to the Risk Appetite Statement following the Business Planning Day held on 31 January 2023. The Chief Executive advised a full review of the Business Plan would be taking place during 2023/24 and a variety of consultation options would be considered. Norman Macdonald commented on the impact development has in the communities we serve and how this must not be underestimated. Helen Mackenzie asked for some information surrounding the number of children in our new developments to quantify the number of families our developments bring to our communities. The Director of Operations advised this would be brought to a future meeting of the Board. **The Board approved the Business Plan (2019/20 – 2023/24) Year 5.**
6.2	**<u>Budgets 2023/24</u>** Detailed budgets for 2023/24 were presented for consideration and approval. The Budgets had been prepared, following the Board decision on 8 February 2023 to increase rents by RPI Minus 8.2% (6%) and taking into account the cash planning limits for 2023/24. Budgets were presented to the Development & Finance Committee on 28 February 2023 where stress testing and covenant compliance checks were performed. The Budgets had been updated since the Committee met on 28 February 2023 to incorporate the HWEC service charges and income of £130K per annum. **The Board:** **a) approved the 2023/24 budgets; and** **b) noted the cash planning limits and 30 year cash flow statement.**
6.3	**<u>Annual Financing Strategy 2023/24</u>** The Director of Finance & Corporate Services presented the Annual Financing Strategy 2023/24 for consideration and approval. Facility B was now fully drawn in line with the 2 year availability period and agreed fixed rate loan profile. Non-utilisation/commitment fees that applied on Facility B no longer apply. **The Board approved the Annual Financing Strategy 2023/24.**
6.4	**<u>Fraud Checklist</u>** The Annual Fraud Checklist was presented for consideration and approval. The Director of Finance & Corporate Services advised we were unable to confirm item 6 on the checklist and employees and managers would be reminded of their obligation to take 2 weeks consecutive holidays annually, those who cannot comply with this requirement require their managers approval who will notify the Director of Finance & Corporate Services so that appropriate measures can be put in place. It was noted that strike actions undertaken by schools in 2022 had impacted some employees taking two weeks consecutive leave. **The Board reviewed and approved the Fraud Checklist.**

6.5 **Development Report**

Gordon Macleod declared an interest in this item and did not participate in the discussion.

The Development Manager provided an update on the Development Programme since the previous Board meeting on 8 February 2023.

Project	Update
Blackwater	6 weeks behind programme due to weather restricting progress.
Lochmaddy	Land Transaction concluded and contractor working on site
Barra	Meter installation completed with an updated programme and handover expected in April 2023.
Crowlista	4 new build properties handed over and care unit handover expected in April 2023.
Scott Road	Final report from the water pressure study received with positive feedback from Scottish Water. A site layout is being investigated and legal agreements progressed.
Low Flyer (Phase 2)	Tender returned and submissions were being assessed.
Leverburgh	Planning application lodged and tender documentation was being prepared. Representations had been made from the community regarding the site layout and a holding objection had been received from SEPA regarding peat management.
Grimsay	Feasibility Study had given a positive response and decrofting was being investigated.
Bernera	In discussions with Scottish Government regarding the cost of developing.
Gravir	Feasibility being finalised, Topography work had completed with the final report anticipated.
Sinclair Avenue NSSE	The final phase consisted of 2 x 2 bedroom homes. One house had sold and the sale of the other was due to complete on 31 March 2023.

Approval was sought for the purchase of land at Leverburgh subject to planning. Donald Macsween raised a concern as to why it was proposed to build six units when the site had capacity for twelve. The Director of Operations stated both the Comhairle's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) and our Development Plan had provision for six units in South Harris and if this was to increase then it would be likely to require projects in other areas to be postponed. Helen Mackenzie commented that decisions need to be evidence based and lobbying from communities should not be the basis for decisions making which can detract from the financial risks. The Chief Executive explained that affordability needed to be factored into our decision making in development and the approved Business Plan had provision for 62 new homes in 2023/24, if 6 extra homes were to be built in one area then they would need to be taken away from another area. Alison MacCorquodale stated that the Risk Appetite around development had decreased as per the approved Business Plan and it would be beneficial to find a further method for which people could register interest for properties in rural areas to work alongside our waiting lists.

The Board:

a) approved the purchase of land at Leverburgh subject to planning; and

b) noted the Development Plan update.

6.6 **Investment Monitoring Report**

The Investment Manager presented an update on the 2022/23 Investment Programme and the procurement timetable for the 2023/24 Investment Programme. Members were advised the procurement for the 2023/24 programme had been prioritised in the event of no grant funding being available to support infra-red heating replacements.

The Board:

a) noted the progress on the 2022/23 Investment Programme;

b) noted the procurement plan for the 2023/24 Investment Programme;

c) approved that kitchen, bathroom, roughcasting programme and the heating installations at Arras Cottages and Lewis Street be postponed if our grant funding application to support the Infra-red replacement programme is unsuccessful.

6.7	<u>**Training Plan**</u> The People Development Officer presented the 2023/24 Staff and Board Training Plans for consideration and approval. The staff training requirements had been identified from a number of different sources including contractual requirements, staff appraisals and discussions with Management Team. The Board Training Plan had been prepared following the Board Development Session held in December 2022. Helen Mackenzie asked if Cyber Security Training could be added to the Staff Training Plan. The People Development Officer advised this was covered under BCarm Risk Modules which all staff complete annually. It was agreed a copy of the Board Training Plan be issued to members. **The Board approved the:** **a) Staff Training Plan 2023/24; and** **b) Board Training Plan 2023/24.**
6.8	<u>**Tenant Participation**</u> **Calum Mackay declared an interest in this item and left the meeting prior to discussion.** The report sought approval not to extend our contract with TPAS (Scotland) beyond May 2023 and to support tenant attendance at the TPAS (Scotland) Annual Conference. An update on the action plan, agreed by the Board, on the 2021 Tenant Satisfaction Survey was provided within the report. Fiona Knape and Helen Mackenzie asked that tenants who attend the conference provide feedback to the Board and efforts be made to ensure tenants across all areas of the Outer Hebrides be given the opportunity to attend. It was agreed this be a condition of the funding of places at the conference. Fiona Knape questioned the efforts being taken to address a decrease in performance in tenant satisfaction with *HHP's contribution to the management of the neighbourhood they live in*. The Service Development Manager advised a large number of estates have been visited by the Housing Officers and Tenant Participation Officer, with tenants informed in advance that the Housing Officer would be in the area. **The Board:** **a) agreed not to extend the TPAS contract;** **b) agreed to fund up to 6 places for the Western Isles Housing Association Communities Forum at the TPAS (Scotland) Annual Conference in June 2023, subject to efforts being made to ensure attendance is representative of all areas of the Outer Hebrides and feedback be provided on the outcomes of the conference; and** **c) noted the Tenant Satisfaction Survey Action Plan.**
POLICIES & STRATEGIES	
7.1	<u>**Rent & Service Charges Policy**</u> **Calum Mackay rejoined the meeting prior to the discussion of this item.** The report provided a review of the Rent & Service Charges Policy. Minor changes had been made to the Policy in relation to Rent Structure and New Build Properties. Helen Mackenzie requested service charges, garage site rent and rents for 1 apt properties be reviewed. The Director of Finance & Corporate Services advised this would be incorporated as part of the Rent Structure review. **The Board approved the Rent & Service Charges Policy.**
7.2	<u>**Expenses Policies**</u> Updated Staff and Members' Expenses Policies were presented to the Board for approval. Both policies had been updated to take into consideration the increased cost of hotel accommodation post COVID-19 and to remove mainland milage rates, with all milage now payable under one rate. The Staff Expenses Policy had been updated to reflect changes in the approved HMRC private use of van allowance. **The Board approved the:** **a) Staff Expenses Policy for consultation with staff and the Union; and** **b) Members Expenses Policy.**

7.3	**<u>Damp, Mould & Condensation Policy</u>** The Investment Manager presented the Damp, Mould & Condensation Policy and provided information on the actions being taken to address these issues within the housing stock. The Policy followed an English Ombudsman recommendation to have a specific policy on Damp and Mould and was in line with expectations from the Scottish Housing Regulator. It also recognised issues raised in the coroner report following the inquest into the death in December 2020 of 2 year old, Awaab Ishak in Barnsley which linked the death to the prevalence of mould in the home. The Policy seeks to ensure that wherever possible, tenants are not adversely affected by the causes of damp and mould and have warm, safe and healthy homes to live in. **The Board:** **a) approved the Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy;** **b) noted the information on the Damp, Mould and Condensation; and** **c) noted the Action Plan.**
7.4	**<u>Workforce Strategy Annual Update</u>** The Chief Executive presented the Workforce Strategy for consultation with staff and the Union. An action plan and apprenticeship scheme had been developed and statistics within the Strategy had been updated. Discussions centred around apprenticeships and the potential to encourage older people into apprenticeships. Alison MacCorquodale queried why the first year apprenticeship wage was below the National Living Wage. Helen Mackenzie stated the need to make posts available outside of the Stornoway area. **Gordon Macleod left the meeting and Calum Mackay took over the role of Chairperson.** The Chief Executive proposed the salary for first year apprenticeships be discussed at the next meeting of the Personnel Working Group. Members were also advised all staff that are able to work from home are given the option to do so. **The Board:** **a) considered and approved the revised Workforce Strategy for consultation with staff and the Union; and** **b) agreed the Workforce Strategy and Apprenticeship scheme be discussed at the next meeting of the Personnel Working Group, following the consultation period.**
7.5	**<u>Procurement Policy & Procurement Strategy</u>** The Corporate Resources Manager advised the annual review of the Procurement Policy & Strategy had taken place with no amendments required. Helen Mackenzie requested the evidence on Community Benefits under the Repairs & Maintenance Contract be shared with Board Members. **The Board noted:** **a) there are no changes to the Procurement Policy or Strategy and the current Policy or Strategy and the current Policy & Strategy will remain valid for a further 12 months;** **b) the Procurement Plan for 2023/24;** **c) the procurement performance for 2022; and** **d) the Contracts & Community Benefit Registers.**
	MONITORING REPORTS
8.1	**<u>Management Report to 31 January 2023</u>** The Finance Manager presented the Management Report to 31 January 2023 for approval. The report highlighted that Financial Covenants were forecast to be met for the year ended 31 March 2023, with an interest cover of 253%. **The Board noted the Management Report at 31 January 2023 and revised forecast out turn at 31 March 2023.**

8.2	<u>**Planned & Cyclical Maintenance 2023/24**</u> The Director of Operations presented an update on the 2023/24 Planned and Cyclical Maintenance Programme. The report set out how maintenance works were prioritised as follows: 1. Statutory and Regulatory Requirements; including annual gas servicing, detection systems and fire door inspections; 2. Health & Safety Issues; 3. Building Fabric Repairs; 4. Environmental Works; and 5. External Fabric Painting. **The Board noted the report.**
MEETING WENT INTO PRIVATE SESSION	

Chairperson Mr Gordon Macleod

SIGNED ……………………………………………………

DATE ……………………………………………………