ITEM NO 3.1

HEBRIDEAN HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Board

Minutes of Meeting held via MS Teams on Thursday 28 November 2023 at 5.30pm

PRELIMINARY ITEM		
ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES		
	Prior to official business, the Chair extended sympathy to the family of FES FM employee Dougie Walker, who had passed away recently. Sympathy was also extended to the family of Colin B M Scott, a tenant who was a faithful attendee at our Board Meetings. Members were informed following the recent cyberattack at the Comhairle we had reached out to offer any practical support.	
1	**Attendance & Apologies**	
	Attendees	Staff & Consultants In Attendance
	Gordon Macleod (Chair)	Dena Macleod (Chief Executive)
	Calum Mackay (Vice-Chair)	Donald Macleod (Director of Finance & Corporate Services)
	Roddy Nicolson	John Maciver (Director of Operations)
	Alison MacCorquodale	Jonathan Fairgrieve (Corporate Services Officer – Minute Taker)
	Tom Howe	Iona France (Governance Officer)
		Angus Smith (Corporate Resources Manager)
	Apologies Received	Angus E MacNeil (Assets Contracts Manager)
	Finlay Stewart	Michael Libby (Corporate Services Officer)
	Helen Mackenzie	Garry Campbell (Debt Management Officer)
	Iain M Macleod	Present for Agenda Items 1-8.5 only
	Norman Macdonald	Sawan Morrison (Development Manager)
		Gary Macleod (Digital Transformation Manager)
		James Morrison (Finance Manager)
		Norma Robb (People Development Officer)
	The Chair welcomed Tom Howe to his first meeting of the Board. The Chair notified Members that Cllr Donald Macsween had resigned from the Board. Donald was thanked for his services to the Board.	
PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL MATTERS		
2	**Declaration of Interest** **No declarations of interest were made.**	
3.1.1	**Minute of Board Meeting 23 August 2023** **The minute of the Board meeting of 23 August 2023 was submitted and approved as a true and accurate record.**	
3.1.2	**Minute of Board Meeting 24 August 2023** **The minute of the Board meeting of 24 August 2023 was submitted and approved as a true and accurate record.**	
3.2	**Action Sheet** The Chief Executive advised positive feedback had been received from the Scottish Housing Regulator visit in August 2023 and the full feedback would be shared with the Chair. **The Action Sheet was noted.**	
4	**Date of Next Meeting** **The date of the next meeting will be Tuesday 13 February 2024.**	

5	**Health & Safety** The Director of Operations informed the Board of an incident that had taken place on the Blackwater Development site where an employee of the contractor had suffered an injury. The Health & Safety Executive had been informed. A formal report from the contractor on the accident was expected shortly. The Scottish Housing Regulator had been notified on the incident. Members were advised an update would be provided when information was received.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

6.1 Business Plan Feedback

Following the Business Planning Day on 7 November 2023, the Chief Executive presented proposed amendments to the Vison, Strapline and Strategic Goals.

Alison MacCorquodale commended the format of the Business Planning Day in particular, the remote connection with Uist.

The Chief Executive thanked Tom Howe for his feedback on the notes of the Business Planning Day and encouraged feedback from other Members.

The Board reviewed the proposed amendments and agreed our:

- **a) Vision be "*to provide great homes and deliver excellent service throughout the Outer Hebrides*";**
- **b) Strapline remains unchanged as "*Making our house your home*"; and**
- **c) Strategic Goals be:**
  1. **Placing tenants at the heart of everything we do**
  2. **Investing in a sustainable way in tenants' homes**
  3. **Being an excellent employer that attracts and retains high quality staff**
  4. **Working with partners to help our communities thrive.**

6.2 Budget Strategy

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services outlined the Budget Strategy and timetable for 2024/25. The Strategy was the first stage of the rent setting process of 2024/25.

The Board approved the 2024/25 Budget Strategy including the Budget Timetable.

6.3 Item taken in Private Session

6.4 Development Monitoring Report

The Development Manager provided an update on our 5 Year Development Plan (2022-27) since the Board meeting on 23 August 2023.

Project	**Update**
Barra	Official Opening took place on 5 November 2023.
Lochmaddy	Progressing well with handover due in April 2024.
Blackwater	Delays with installation of electrical meters pose a risk to phase 1 handover in March 2024.
Leverburgh	Final Quantity Surveyor report awaited which will be provided to Scottish Government once received.
Scott Road	Work on planning halted until agreement with landowners over road layout has been reached.
Grimsay & Breaclete	Land acquisitions being pursued.
Gravir	Positive demand survey carried out however, no new housing applications have been received.
Point	Included in the Comhairle's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) for 2023/36. Positive feedback from planning department and full feasibility being sought.

Members were advised the Comhairle's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) was under review however, due to the IT issues at the Comhairle this may be delayed. The Chief Executive advised there were some items on the reviewed SHIP that were not part of our Development Plan.

Gordon Macleod congratulated staff on the nomination for the Scottish Regeneration Forum (SURF) Award for Best Practice in Delivering Wider Regeneration Benefits from Investments in Housing for the Goathill development.

The Board:

- **a) reviewed and approved the revised Development Risk Thresholds; and**

	b) noted the Development Plan update.
6.5	<u>**Investment Monitoring Report**</u> The Assets & Contracts Manager provided an update on the 2023/24 Investment Programme. The programme as a whole was progressing well. The replacement of infra-red heating was on target for completion and had received positive tenant feedback. There were some delays to works in the Southern Isles due to issues with transport links. An increase in the uptake of Occupational Therapy works resulted in only £27K of budget remaining, Members were advised that additional grant funding for Occupational Therapy works would be sought if the opportunities arose. Calum Mackay questioned whether the replacement of solid fuel heating systems could be built into our policy on change of tenancy. The Director of Operations advised while this would be possible it could result in additional void times while the work was being carried out and contractor capacity could be an issue. The Chief Executive advised the costs and benefits of replacement of heating at change of tenancy would be identified during the Business Planning process. Gordon Macleod noted the impact issues with transportation links were having on the programme and advised this would be discussed with Scottish Housing Ministers at the scheduled meeting on 4 December 2023. **The Board:** **a) approved that capacity going forward in the 2023/24 heating programme be used to replace solid fuel heating system for new tenants or where the system has broken beyond repair;** **b) noted the progress on the Investment Programme.**
POLICIES & STRATEGIES	
7.1	<u>**New & Expectant Mothers Policy**</u> The Corporate Resources Manager presented the revised New & Expectant Mothers Policy for consultation with Unison and staff. No material changes had been made to the Policy. **The Board approved:** **a) the revised New & Expectant Mothers Policy for consultation with Unison and staff; and** **b) if there are no material changes to the Policy arising from the consultation, that the Policy is approved, otherwise a revised Policy be presented to the next meeting of the Board.**
7.2	<u>**Parental Leave Policy**</u> The updated Parental Leave Policy was presented consultation with Unison and staff. The Chief Executive advised the policy had been in place since 2015 with only one request for unpaid leave. Staff would be reminded of their entitlement through the weekly newsletter. The Policy had been amended to provide clarity on giving notice for taking parental leave and conditions attached to a return from parental leave. **The Board approved:** **a) the revised Parental Leave Policy for consultation with Unison and staff; and** **b) if there are no material changes to the Policy arising from the consultation, that the Policy is approved, otherwise a revised Policy be presented to the next meeting of the Board.**
7.3	<u>**Recruitment Policy**</u> The Chief Executive presented the revised Recruitment Policy for consultation with Unison and staff. The Policy had been updated in line with the EVH Model Policy and took account of our commitments under the Disability Confident Scheme and Armed Forces Covenant pledge, whereby anyone with a disability or an Armed Forces veteran would be guaranteed an interview if they met the essential criteria. Alison MacCorquodale asked whether diversity was considered when determining a recruitment panel and if relocation expenses were considered. The Chief Executive advised the recruitment panel consisted of a mix of genders and included someone who was not part of the team where the vacancy arose. Relocation expenses were considered for certain roles. Calum Mackay suggested a mock recruitment process be undertaken by Board Members. The Chief Executive advised this would form part of the Board Training Plan. **The Board approved:** **a) the revised Recruitment Policy for consultation with Unison and staff; and** **b) if there are no material changes to the Policy arising from the consultation, that the Policy is approved, otherwise a revised Policy be presented to the next meeting of the Board.**

7.4	**<u>Training & Development Policy</u>** The People Development Officer presented the revised Training & Development Policy for consultation with Unison and staff. Minor changes had been made to the policy including more detail on training for Board Members. **The Board approved:** **a) the revised Training & Development Policy for consultation with Unison and staff; and** **b) if there are no material changes to the Policy arising from the consultation, that the Policy is approved, otherwise a revised Policy be presented to the next meeting of the Board.**
7.5	**<u>Digital Transformation Strategy</u>** The Digital Transformation Manager provided an update on progress on the Digital Transformation Strategy. It was proposed to extend the Strategy for one year to allow full implementation of all elements of the new housing system. Members were advised information would be presented on lessons learned and efficiency savings of the new housing system. Calum Mackay questioned if the extension would require to be longer than 12 months. The Digital Transformation Manager advised it was not anticipated the extension would require to be longer than 12 months, but the Board would be kept updated on progress. Members were advised a demonstration of the tenant portal would be provided to Board Members prior to being launched. **The Board approved an extension of the Digital Transformation Strategy to the end of November 2024.**
7.6	**<u>Disciplinary Procedures</u>** The Chief Executive presented the updated Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures for Directors and Staff and the procedure for Handling a Serious Complaint against the Chief Officer. The procedures had been presented to the Joint Consultative Committee on 10 October 2023 and the feedback had been captured in the revised procedures. Training would be provided for all staff, managers and Board Members. **The Board approved:** **a) the updated Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures for consultation with Unison and staff;** **b) the updated Handling a Serious Complaint against the Chief Officer; and** **c) if there are no material changes to the Disciplinary & Grievance Procedure arising from the consultation, that the Procedure is approved, otherwise a revised Procedure be presented to the next meeting of the Board.**
7.7	**<u>Policy Consultation Response</u>** The Governance Officer presented the Alcohol & Substance Misuse Policy following consultation with Staff and Unison. Five responses had been received to the consultation and amendments had been made to the Policy to provide clarification. **The Board approved the Alcohol & Substance Misuse Policy.**
7.8	**<u>Safeguarding Policy Review</u>** The report confirmed the compliant of our policies with a safeguarding element with OSCR guidance. **The Board noted the review of policies in respect of Safeguarding.**
MONITORING REPORTS	
8.1	**<u>Quarterly Treasury Report to 30 September 2023</u>** The Director of Finance & Corporate Services presented the Treasury Management activities for the second quarter of 2023/24 and confirmed our cash balances were £10.248M, an increase of £0.674M compared to the previous quarter. The balance was anticipated to reduce over the next quarter due to all grant monies for Lochmaddy being drawn down and progress on the Investment Programme. All covenants were forecast to be complied with for 2023/24. **The Board noted the:** **a) quarterly report on the Analysis of Investment and Borrowing;** **b) outstanding loans at 30 September 2023 of £17M;** **c) cash balance at 30 September 2023 of £10.248M.**

8.2	**Business Plan Monitoring Report** The Chief Executive presented progress to 30 October 2023 on the Delivery Plan for the Business Plan 2019/20 – 2023/24. The report showed that overall, we are below target. Members were advised realistic targets need to be set when setting targets for the next Business Plan. The Director of Operations provided an update on targets as follows:

Measure of Success		Update
1.1	% of satisfaction with our overall services >90%	Information gathered through Tenant Satisfaction Survey carried out every 3 years, with the next survey due in 2024. New Business Plan to look at an improved way to monitor this.
1.7	88% of tenants satisfied with opportunities to participate in decision making	
1.3	Response to complaints within SPSO targets	Occasionally complaints are not responded to within timescale but this was being monitored weekly to ensure targets are met.
1.4	Level of current arrears at 2% of Gross Debt	After a long period of stability, arrears were on an upward trend and this was being monitored closely.
1.6	Provide options for a rent guarantee period	Deadline postponed to 1 April 2025.
2.10	Reduce % of tenants in fuel poverty to under 25% by 2023 (subject to fuel prices)	Fuel poverty has been significantly impacted by the cost of living crisis and huge increases in fuel prices

The Board noted the Business Plan Monitoring Report to 30 October 2023.

8.3	**Management Report to 30 September 2023** The Finance Manager presented the Management Report for the month ended 30 September 2023. The report showed our financial covenants would be met for the year ended 31 March 2024 with £610K available headroom. There was continued pressure on general repairs and the Finance Manager advised this was being closely monitored. Calum Mackay questioned if increased budgetary provision should be made for void repairs in 2024/25. The Chief Executive advised increased void repair costs was a sector wide issue and preventive measures were being put in place. **The Board noted the Management Report at 30 September 2023 and revised forecast out turn at 31 March 2024.**
8.4	**Stock Condition Survey** The Assets & Contracts Manager provided an update on the 2023 Stock Condition Survey. All field work on the surveys had been carried out with a final report on the findings excepted week commencing 4 December 2023. Members were advised the final report would be presented to the Board in February 2024. Calum Mackay requested data from previous surveys be included in the report to show any improvements in stock condition. The Director of Operations advised a consultation had been received from Scottish Government on a new Net Zero target. This will replace Energy Efficiency Standards for Social Housing 2, and would inform future Stock Condition Surveys. Further Information would be brought to the next meeting of the Board. **The Board noted the report.**
8.5	**Board Plan & Board Calendar 2024** The report outlined a plan in respect of items to be considered by Board for 2024 and the 2024 Board Calendar. **The Board noted the:** **a) Board Plan for 2024; and** **b) 2024 Board Calendar.**
MEETING WENT INTO PRIVATE SESSION	

Chairperson Mr Gordon Macleod

SIGNED ……………………………………………………….

DATE ……………………………………………………….