hebridean housing partnership

ITEM NO 3.1

HEBRIDEAN HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Board

Minutes of Meeting held via MS Teams on Tuesday 13 February 2024 at 5.30pm

PRELIMINARY ITEM	
ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES	
1	**Attendance & Apologies** Attendees: Gordon Macleod (Chair); Roddy Nicolson; Alison MacCorquodale; Norman A Macdonald; Tom Howe; Iain M Macleod; Norman Macdonald; Finlay Stewart Apologies Received: Calum Mackay (Vice-Chair); Helen Mackenzie 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); Michael Libby (Corporate Services Officer); Monika Fortagh (Debt Management Officer); Sawan Morrison (Development Manager) Present for Agenda Items 1-8.5 only: James Morrison (Finance Manager); Angus Smith (Corporate Resources Manager); Angus E MacNeil (Assets Contracts Manager); Peter O'Donnell (Investment Manager)
	Special Leave Request A Special Leave request had been received from Mr Calum Mackay for the February and March 2024 due to ill health. The Chair, on behalf of the Board, wished Calum all the best in his recovery. **The Board approved Mr Calum Mackay's request for Special Leave.**
	The Chair informed the Board of two members of staff moving onto employment elsewhere. Jonathan Fairgrieve, Corporate Services Officer, was moving on to be Governance & Assurance Manager at Bield Housing. The Chair wished him well in his new post and thanked him for his support to the Board during his time at HHP. Nataliya Nedkova, Customer Services Supervisor, was moving on to take up a post at the Assessor's Office. The Chair wished her well in her new post and thanked her for her work during her time at HHP.
PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL MATTERS	
2	**Declaration of Interest** **Gordon Macleod declared an interest at item 9.3.**
3.1.1	**Minute of Board Meeting 28 November 2023** **The minute of the Board meeting of 28 November 2023 was submitted and approved as a true and accurate record.**
3.2	**Action Sheet** The Director of Operations advised that following public consultation on the option of a second phase at the Scott Road development, the outcome was positive. Out of the 69 responses received, 59 were in favour of the second phase. North Harris Trust have been provided with the results and feedback on the availability of the land was expected within the next two weeks. It was agreed an update would be provided at the Board Meeting in March 2024. **The Action Sheet was noted.**

4	**<u>Date of Next Meeting</u>** **The date of the next meeting will be Tuesday 26 March 2024.**
5	**<u>Health & Safety</u>** The Director of Operations provided an update on the incident at the Blackwater Development site where an employee of the contractor was injured. Members were advised the Notifiable Event with the Scottish Housing Regulator had been closed and continual monitoring of the site was being carried out by our Clerk of Works. The Director of Operations advised the employee was continuing to recover well. **The update on Health & Safety was noted.**
ITEMS FOR DECISION	
6.1	**<u>Business Plan</u>** The Chief Executive presented the draft Five Year Business Plan (2024/25 to 2028/29). The Plan had been prepared following three key events held which included partners, staff and Board Members. A presentation on the main themes of the plan was given, which were: • Populations demographics and how we contribute to increasing population or at least stemming the decline; • Climate Changes and the impact on all our communities, in particular our tenants and the neighbourhoods they live in; • Opportunities with the planned renewable works to provide housing for workers; • Development that supports rural communities to help them thrive; and • Technology, both the benefits it brings to our business and tenants and recognising the costs of keeping technology up to date. Members were advised a new Risk Appetite Statement had been prepared following the Risk Appetite Session held with Board Members on 10 January 2024. The Chief Executive highlighted the appetite for New Build was Low and advised this would require review if the Board wished to be involved in housing for renewables workers over the lifecycle of the Business Plan. **The Board approved the:** **a) Draft Business Plan 2024/25 to 2028/29 as the basis for the consultation document, with a final Plan brought to the Board in March 2024; and** **b) Risk Appetite Statement, included in the Business Plan.**
6.2	**<u>Budgets 2024/25</u>** The Director of Finance & Corporate Services outlined the proposed 2024/25 budgets including charges for rents, garages and services. Consultation on the proposed rent increase was carried out from 6 December 2023 – 14 January 2024. Two options were given to tenants: • RPI plus 0.5% increase (6.6%); and • RPI minus 1.0% increase (5.1%). The survey was published on our website and across our social media platforms with 16 completed responses received. The Director of Finance & Corporate Services proposed that rents be increased by 5.1% and garage rents, garage site rents and all other services and charges for 2024/25 be increase in like with October RPI, an increase of 6.1%. Detailed budgets would be presented to the Development & Finance Committee and Board in March 2024. **The Board:** **a) Approved the increase of house rents for 2024/25 at RPI minus 1% (5.1%), an average increase of £4.61 per week to £95.01 per week;** **b) Approved garage rents and garage site rents for 2024/25 be increase by 6.1% (October RPI);** **c) Approved all other services and charges for 2024/25 be increased by 6.1% (October RPI); and** **d) Noted the detailed budgets be submitted to the Board for approval on 26 March 2024.**
6.3	**<u>Investment Programme</u>** An update on the 2023/24 and 2024/25 Investment Programme was presented by the Assets & Contracts Manager. The 2023/24 programme was progressing well, with no issues identified with substantive elements of the programme. Members were advised roughcast works were not proceeding due to tender prices significantly exceeding budget. **The Board** **a) Noted the progress on the Investment Programme; and** **b) Approved the Investment Programme 2024/25.**

6.4	**Training Plan 2024/25** The Governance Officer presented the 2024/25 Staff and Board Training Plans for consideration and approval. The plans were based on a variety of sources and requirements identified during the year, focussing on Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity and Information Security. Members were encouraged to contact the Governance Officer with any training requirements. **The Board approved the:** **a) Staff Training Plan 2024/25; and** **b) Board Training Plan 2024/25.**
6.5	**Electric Vehicle Charging Point** The report covered two aspects of EV Charging Points: provision for tenanted properties; and use of the EV Charging Point at the Stornoway office. Updated Scottish Building regulations, which came into force in June 2023, require that every new build property must be designed and constructed in such a way that provision for the charging of EV's is made where car parking spaces are located within the building or the curtilage of the building. The Investment Manager advised the installation of charging points applied to new build properties and regenerated property, such as care unit conversions, where a building warrant was granted after June 2023. Iain Macleod questioned whether it was a 1:1 house to charger ratio. The Investment Manager advised this would be the case, with exception to flatted properties (e.g. HWEC, where the number of chargers would depend on the number car parking spaces. In line with our ESG Strategy and wider zero-carbon initiatives, a policy to extend the current charging infrastructure at the Stornoway Office to Staff and visitors through the ChargePlace Scotland network had been drafted. Gordon Macleod queried whether management of this scheme would affect staff workload. The Corporate Resources Manager advised ChargePlace Scotland would manage this for us. **The Board approved the:** **a) Procedure for granting permission for EV Charge Point Installation; and** **b) Staff & Visitor Electric Car Charging Policy.**
6.6	**Board Member Appointment** The Governance Officer presented a proposed appointment to the Board. Mrs Fiona Macleod, who served on the Board from 2018 to 2022 as a Community Member, had expressed an interest in returning to the Board. The appointment would be to fill one of the vacant Tenant Member posts, as a Community Member in accordance with Rule 40.3 It was proposed the appointment would commence on 1 March 2023 until our next AGM. **The Board approved Mrs Fiona Macleod be appointed to fill one of the vacant Tenant Member posts as a Community Member until the AGM.**
POLICIES & STRATEGIES	
7.1	**Community Grants Policy** The Director of Operations presented the revised Community Grants Policy for consideration and approval. The Policy had been reviewed and amended to delegate decisions on whether projects are supported to the Operations Working Group. **The Board approved the Community Grants Policy**
7.2	**Domestic Abuse Policy** The reviewed Domestic Abuse Policy was reviewed and there were no significant changes made. The Violence Against Women Partnership had been consulted as part of the review. Members were advised Staff would be briefed and refreshed on the provisions of the Policy. **The Board:** **a) noted the review of the Domestic Abuse Policy and that no content changes were required; and** **b) agreed to review the Policy in 2027.**
7.3	**Employee Health & Safety at Work Policies** The Corporate Resources Manager presented the Smoking at Work and Young Workers Policies. Following the review of the policies, no changes had been identified. **The Board approved:** **a) noted the following policies had been reviewed and that no content changes were required** • **Smoking at Work** • **Young Workers; and** **b) agreed to review the Policy in 2027.**

7.4	**Stress Management Policy** The Corporate Resources Manager presented the Stress Management Policy for consultation with staff and Unison. The Policy had been reviewed by the Health & Safety Committee with minor changes proposed. **The Board approved:** **a) the revised Stress Management 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	**Fraud Policy & Fraud Checklist** The Director of Finance & Corporate Services presented the reviewed Fraud Policy. The Policy requires a Fraud Checklist be prepared annually and presented to the Audit & Risk Committee and Board. The Fraud Checklist was approved by the Audit & Risk Committee at the meeting held earlier in the day. **The Board:** **a) approved the Fraud Policy; and** **b) noted the Fraud Checklist.**
7.6	**Whistleblowing Policy** The Governance Officer presented the Whistleblowing Policy for consideration and approval. Following the review of the policy there have been updates to the contacts appended and formatting changes. The appeals process was removed from the policy and added to our procedure manual. **The Board approved the Whistleblowing Policy.**
7.7	**Health & Safety Policy Annual Review** The report advised on the annual review of the Health & Safety Policy. The review was carried out to capture any changes in relation to any new Health & Safety legislation, best practice and our business requirements. No changes were required. **The Board noted the 2024 review of the Health & Safety Policy and that no changes are required to the Policy.**
7.8	**Policy Consultation Response** The report provided an update on the recent policy consultations with Staff and Unison, following which minor changes to the Recruitment Policy and Disciplinary Procedures were made. **The Board approved the minor changes to the Recruitment Policy and Disciplinary Procedures following the consultation process.**
	MONITORING REPORTS
8.1	**Management Report to 31 December 2023** The Finance Manager presented the Management Report for the month ended 31 December 2023. The report showed our financial covenants would be met for the year ended 31 March 2024 with £600K available headroom. Overspend on General Repairs had reduced from £128K in September 2023 to £94K at the end of December 2023. Delays on development allowed for additional monies to be placed on deposit. Savings of £30K had been identified on interest paid, due to interest rates not reaching the levels anticipated. **The Board noted the Management Report at 31 December 2023 and revised forecast out turn at 31 March 2024.**
8.2	**Quarterly Treasury Report to 31 December 2023** The Director of Finance & Corporate Services presented the Treasury Management activities for the third quarter of 2023/24 and confirmed our cash balances were £10.328M, an increase of £0.080M compared to the previous quarter. All covenants were forecast to be complied with for 2023/24. Iain Macleod asked how much of the cash balances were committed. The Director of Finance & Corporate Services advised that he would provide further details to Iain Macleod but cash balances were approximately £3M by the end of the financial year as shown in the cashflow statement included in the Management Report at item 8.1. A 30 year cashflow statement was included within the Business Plan at item 6.1 showing how cash balances would be utilised over that period. **The Board noted the:** **a) quarterly report on the Analysis of Investment and Borrowing;** **b) outstanding loans at 31 December 2023 of £17M;** **c) cash balance at 31 December 2023 of £10.328M.**

8.3	**<u>Business Plan Monitoring Report</u>** The Chief Executive presented progress to 31 December 2023 on the Delivery Plan for the Business Plan 2019/20 – 2023/24. The report showed that overall, we are below target. The Chief Executive explained there were a number of indicators performing below target which related to the Tenant Satisfaction Survey, which was last carried out in July 2021 therefore did not reflect current performance. Members were advised proposed performance indicators and targets for the next 5 year Business Plan were included in the Business Plan at item 6.1 on the agenda. **The Board noted the Business Plan Monitoring Report to 31 December 2023.**
8.4	**<u>Stock Condition Survey</u>** The Assets & Contracts Manager provided an update on the 2023 Stock Condition Survey. The findings from the survey showed 93% compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS). Members were advised the 5 Year Investment Programme, based on the findings of the survey, would be presented to the Board in March 2024. Gordon Macleod stated it was encouraging to see the increased compliance with SHQS. **The Board noted the report.**
MEETING GOES INTO PRIVATE SESSION		