hebridean housing partnership

ITEM NO 3.1

HEBRIDEAN HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Board Minutes of Meeting held via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday, 25 March 2025 at 5.30pm

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">PRELIMINARY ITEM</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td colspan="2"><u>Attendance & Apologies</u></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td><u>Attendees via MS Teams</u>
Gordon Macleod (Chair)
Alison Maccorquodale
Calum Mackay
Duncan Macinnes
Fiona Macleod
Helen Mackenzie
Norman Macdonald
Valerie Russell
Gary Lamont
Iain M Macleod</td><td><u>Staff & Consultants in Attendance</u>
Dena Macleod (Chief Executive)
Donald Macleod (Director of Finance & Corporate Services)
John Maciver (Director of Operations)
Angus E MacNeil (Assets & Contracts Manager)
Garry Campbell (Debt Management Officer)
Iona France (Governance Officer)
Joel Martin (Corporate Services Officer)
Michael Libby (Corporate Services Officer – Minute Taker)
Mina Maclean (Housing Officer)
<u>In attendance for Public Items Only</u>
Angus Smith (Corporate Resources Manager)
Donalda Mackinnon (Area Manager)
James Morrison (Finance Manager)
Katrina Rowlands (Service Development Manager)
Katie Walker (Area Manager)
Sawan Morrison (Development Manager)
Peter O'Donnell (Investment Manager)</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">The Chair paid tribute to Calum Macdonald, acknowledging his significant contributions to CIB Services and HHP.

Calum was involved with HHP from the early days of the shadow board in 2004 and served as an auditor until March 2011, returning again in March 2020 until ill health forced his retirement in November 2024.

The Chair described Calum as a "gentle giant" with a tremendous capacity to do good for the people he served and, on behalf of HHP Board and staff, expressed sincere condolences to Calum's wife, Margaret, and his family.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL MATTERS</th></tr>
<tr><td>1.1</td><td colspan="2"><u>Appointment of Board Member</u>

The Chief Executive introduced Colin Gilmour as a potential new Board member. Colin previously held a senior post within NHS Western Isles and was involved in community planning and the Drug and Alcohol Forum.

The Board approved Colin Gilmour's appointment to fill the vacant Community Member post until the 2025 AGM.</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td colspan="2"><u>Declaration of Interest</u>

There were no Declarations of Interest.</td></tr>
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3.1	**<u>Minute of Board Meeting 11 February 2025</u>** **The minute of the Board meeting of 11 February 2025 was submitted and approved as a true and accurate record subject to a change in item 6.1 as requested by Helen Mackenzie.** **Ms Mackenzie requested for a sentence to be changed from 'Helen Mackenzie suggested we look at the option of using Priority Search Services. She also asked that we consider including some "leading indicators" along with our current indicators which are all "lagging" to 'Helen Mackenzie suggested we look at the option of using priority search approach to rate importance in the future rather than a traditional ranking method'.**
3.2	**<u>Action Sheet</u>** The Chief Executive advised there were no updates to report on the Action Sheet. **The Action Sheet was noted.**
4	**<u>Date of Next Meeting</u>** **The date of the next meetings will be Tuesday 20 May 2025.**
5	**<u>Health & Safety</u>** **Nothing to report.**

ITEMS FOR DECISION	
6.1	**<u>Business Plan</u>** The Chief Executive presented the Business Plan 2024/25 to 2028/29, highlighting the inclusion of tenant feedback. The feedback from tenants showed strong support for affordability and investment in homes, with 96% prioritising affordability and investment. Overall, there were 69 responses received, with 67 of these responses provided by tenants, which equates to around 2% of our tenants. There was some interest in reintroducing the Right to Buy and a focus on investment rather than development, as 57 respondents stated they would be interested in the reintroduction of Right to Buy whilst 50 respondents stated investment should be given priority over new build. Helen Mackenzie highlighted the importance of clarity and ease of understanding when publishing the business plan, and communication with tenant groups would enable us to generate feedback on this. Ms Mackenzie also suggested considering shared ownership models as an alternative to Right to Buy, noting that while Right to Buy is not possible due to Scottish Government regulations, shared ownership model could be a viable option. The Chief Executive agreed that changes could be made to highlight the alternative to Right to Buy and advised that the Tenant Engagement Officer would be consulted on clarity and understanding of aspects of the Business Plan. Calum Mackay emphasised the importance of promoting investment in older stock and the benefits of site visits for board members and officers. Helen Mackenzie proposed engaging tenants in defining a "good as new" standard for older properties, aiming to bring the standard up to a level more comparable with new build homes. **The Board:** **a) approved the 2025 update to the Business Plan 2024/25 to 2028/29 subject to inclusion of Shared Equity as an alternative to Right to Buy; and** **b) noted the outcome of the consultation and our response to the issues raised.**
6.2	**<u>Budgets 2025/26</u>** The Director of Finance & Corporate Services presented the budgets, noting that they had been scrutinised by the Development Finance Committee. The budgets were prepared using the cash planning limits approved by the board in February 2025. There is a variation in the income budget as the aids & adaptations grant has not been confirmed. The increase in supervision and management costs is being funded from savings. s, Repairs and estate works exceeded the cash planning limits but were funded from planned maintenance. Investment increased by £40,000 for the website rebuild. Development costs were reduced due to higher spend in the current year and reprofiling of projects. **The Board:** **a) approved the 2025/26 budgets; and** **b) noted the cash planning limits and 30 year cash flow statement.**

6.3	**Investment Programme** The Assets & Contacts Manager provided an update on the current year's Investment Programme noting that most adaptations were complete and that a small number of jobs would carry over to the next financial year with completion expected in early 2025/26. Due to technical challenges with the installation of Air Source heating at Doig Crescent, an alternative option, Quantum High Heat Retention was determined to be the most suitable. Helen Mackenzie queried if the installation of the Quantum heating system would result in cost savings and improved heating quality for tenants. The Investment Manager explained that the Quantum heating system offered a 25% improvement on previous storage heating costs and offered tenants more control over their heating. **The Board:** **a) approved the installation of Quantum storage heating in the Doig Crescent flats rather than air source heating as is the current policy position;** **b) noted the progress on the 2024/25 Investment Programme;** **c) noted the update on the 2025/26 Investment Programme; and** **d) noted the update on Aids and Adaptations and the waiting list**
6.4	**Tenant Furnishings & Fittings at Tenancy Termination** Area Manager, Donalda Mackinnon presented a revised approach to tenant furnishings and fittings at tenancy termination. The current policy requires outgoing tenants to remove all furnishings and floor coverings. The proposed revision would allow outgoing tenants to leave items in the property where agreed, and this would be implemented for a six-month trial period. The revised approach includes waivers for both outgoing and incoming tenants to sign, ensuring that all parties agree to the terms of leaving and accepting the furnishings and fittings. Calum Mackay raised a concern about how to test the floor structure under laminate flooring to ensure safety. The Investment Manager advised that the policy includes provisions for lifting laminate flooring if necessary to inspect for issues like leaks. Helen Mackenzie proposed that if the trial goes well, the board should delegate the authority to continue the policy without needing to bring it back for approval. **The Board:** **a) approved the revised approach for tenancy changes where the outgoing tenant wishes to leave furnishings and fittings in the property, for a six-month trial period, backdated to March 1 2025;** **b) approved that if successful, the policy will remain in place for a further six months, with six-monthly updates made available to board members; and** **c) noted that the policy will be reviewed as part of the Business Plan 2026 review to decide on permanent implementation.**
6.5	**Board Training** The Governance Officer presented the board training plan for 2025/26, which was prepared following regulatory and statutory requirements and responses to the board skills audit. Calum Mackay inquired about the relevance of discipline and grievance training for board members. The Chief Executive clarified that this was to prepare Board members for any disciplinary actions involving the Chief Executive or Directors. **The Board approved the Board Training Plan 2025/26.**

POLICIES & STRATEGIES	
7.1	**Allocations Policy** Area Manager, Donalda Mackinnon, presented the updated allocations policy, which was last approved in 2022. Ms Mackinnon noted that there had been no legislative changes since then. The Operations Management Working Group had reviewed the amended policy with alterations made as a result. Helen Mackenzie acknowledged the thorough review process and thanked the officers for their helpful feedback and preparation of the policy. **The Board:** **a) approved the Allocations Policy at Appendix 1 for consultation with tenants; and** **b) agreed if there are no material comments arising from the consultation that the Allocations Policy be approved, otherwise a revised Policy will be presented to the next meeting of the Board.**

7.2	**<u>Lift Safety Management Policy</u>** The Investment Manager presented the Lift Safety Management Policy, which was required due to the presence of lifts at Bremner Court. The policy aims to ensure the safety and welfare of tenants and users of the lifts and covers the management and maintenance requirements. The Chair raised a question about whether lift maintenance and servicing can be carried out by locally based contractors or if mainland contractors would be required. The Investment Manager confirmed that Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CNES) provides a responsive repair service, but up to now there have been no issues with the lifts. Helen Mackenzie highlighted the importance of continuity arrangements in case of power outages. The Investment Manager explained that there is a backup diesel generator for the Housing with Extra Care facility and that confirmation will be sought on whether the lifts have emergency battery backup. Since the meeting, The Investment Manager received the following update from CNES: "The lift is attached to the essential board which is connected to the generator. If the generator failed there is an emergency lowering system that can be used. The lifts have communication to a call centre which has a battery back up in the event of power failure. The call would go to Faire who would then alert us to the issue (person trapped) and we would organise for the person to be safely taken out of the lift." **The Board approved the Lift Safety Management Policy.**
7.3	**<u>Treasury Management Policy</u>** The Director of Finance & Corporate Services presented the updated Treasury Management Policy, which included minor updates related to changes from 2021 and the addition of a section on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) requirements. **The Board approve the Treasury Management Policy**
7.4	**<u>Annual Financing Strategy</u>** The Director of Finance and Corporate Services presented the Annual Financing Strategy, which set out the strategy for the next fiscal year. The strategy includes a detailed cash flow statement for the upcoming year. Key changes from the previous strategy included a reduction in the forecasted peak debt from £21M to £19.5M, expected to be reached in 2026/27. The Strategy now shows the first capital repayment on the borrowing facility renegotiated in 2021, with an £800K repayment due in 2030/31, continuing annually until fully repaid. **The Board approved the Annual Financing Strategy**
7.5	**<u>Repairs & Maintenance Policy (Recharges & Welfare)</u>** Area Manager, Katie Walker, presented the d revised approach to recharging repairs where there are vulnerabilities and welfare concerns. The proposed addendum to the Repairs and Maintenance Policy was discussed in the Operations Working Group and details circumstances where it may not be appropriate to recharge a tenant. Decisions on recharges will involve seeking advice from other agencies and documenting the process. **The Board approved the Recharges & Welfare addendum to the Repairs & Maintenance Policy**
7.6	**<u>Procurement Strategy</u>** The Corporate Resources Manager presented the Procurement Strategy report and advised the Board two new objectives had been added to the strategy in relation to our Environmental and Social Governance (ESG) Strategy and the requirements of Fair Work First (FWF) y, whilst our procurement KPIs had been mapped to our Business Plan Strategic goals and Procurement Strategy objectives. The Corporate Resources Manager advised that we were undergoing an improvement programme through Scotland Excel who were examining our approach to procurement, both in policy and strategy terms. Helen Mackenzie enquired about our local suppliers performance indicator at Appendix 3, suggesting we add a caveat in relation to this indicator and then questioned why we do not receive all of our invoices electronically. The Director of Finance & Corporate Services advised the Board of our methodology regarding how we define local supply chains and added electronic invoicing had increased significantly within the past year, but our utilities provider for our HWEC facility did not use electronic invoicing. **The Board:** **a) approved the Procurement Strategy at Appendix 1;** **b) noted the Procurement Plan for 2025/26 at Appendix 2;** **c) noted the procurement performance for 2024 set out in Appendix 3; and** **d) noted the Contracts & Community benefit Registers at appendices 4 & 5.**

7.7	**<u>Expenses Policies</u>** The Corporate Resources Manager presented the Expenses Policies report and advised the Board that visitor levies (tourist taxes) are expected to be implemented through cities in Scotland which might impact earlybookings made within the 2025/26 financial year. The Corporate Resources manager added that whilst the tourist tax does not impact directly on the 2025/26 financial year, levies would begin to appear in advance of bookings which are made from October 2025 and should be excluded in any accommodation cost calculation. Calum Mackay queried whether the majority of meetings now take place on Microsoft Teams. The Director of Finance & Corporate Resources advised the Board that most meetings are held on Microsoft Teams but there are occasions when physical presence is required. **The Board noted the review of the Expenses Policies.**

MONITORING REPORTS	
8.1	**<u>Management Report to 28 February 2025</u>** The Finance Manager presented the Management Report to 28 February 2025 and advised the Board that financial covenants would be met for the year ended 31 March 2025, with a headroom forecast of £619K. The Finance Manager then commented there had been sizeable void repair costs which had resulted in an increase in the void repair forecast. **The Board noted the Management Report at 28 February 2025 and revised forecast out turn at 31 March 2025.**
8.2	**<u>Development Report</u>** The Development Manager presented the Development Report and provided a brief update on the progress of our projects. **The Board noted the Development Programme progress.**
MEETING GOES INTO PRIVATE SESSION	

Chairperson Mr Gordon Macleod

SIGNED ………………………………………………………

DATE ………………………………………………………