

BUIDHEANN TIGHEADAS LOCH AILLSE AGUS AN  
EILEIN SGITHEANAICH  
LOCHALSH AND SKYE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

MINUTES of MEETING of MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE held on  
Monday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2008 at 7pm at Broadford Hotel, Broadford, Isle of Skye

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**PRESENT:**

Mr I MacLean	(Chairperson)
Mr T Harvey	(Vice-Chairperson)
Mr D MacKenzie	(Treasurer)
Miss I Moore	
Mrs J Turkington	
Miss J MacPherson	
Mr D Brown	
Cllr H Fraser	(Co-opted Member)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr L MacDonald	(Director)
Mrs J Masson	(Property Services Assistant)

1. **APOLOGIES:**

Mrs P Walsh

2. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**Management Committee Meeting (16/6/2008)**

The Minutes were moved for adoption by Miss I Moore, seconded by Mr T Harvey and approved unanimously.

**Progress Report from Previous Minutes**

Members noted the content of the report.

**Other Matters Arising**

None.

3. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

The Director reported on the following:

- The Scottish Housing Regulator has categorised the level of engagement it intends to have with the Association as 'low', following its review of the range

of performance returns from Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). A member asked that congratulations to the staff be recorded for this achievement.

- The Scottish Government is to carry out a consultation process as it is considering extending the Freedom of Information Act to include RSLs. A copy of the discussion document has been requested and will be available to members. A training day on the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts was attended by staff and Committee members on Friday, 4 July 2008.
- The Office of Fair Trading has issued the Association with its Consumer Credit Licence.
- The Risk Management Strategy briefing sessions were held on Friday, 20 June 2008. Mrs J Turkington had been unable to attend and Mr T Harvey took her place. A draft Risk Management Policy has been received from the consultant, and staff will soon be engaged in identifying key risks. It is anticipated that the new Risk Management Strategy will be completed by September 2008.
- The Highland Housing & Community Care Trust (HHCT) continues to carry out research into its future role.
- The Association is continuing its review of the development programme to reflect the reduction in grant funding for 2008/2009. To achieve the development programme spend, more private finance will be required, which may result in a requirement to set higher rents at the annual rent review.

Members noted the remainder of the report and attachments.

#### **4. HOUSING SERVICES**

##### **(a) Housing Services Report**

The Director reported on the following:

- At the next meeting of the Management Group of the Highland Housing Register, the facility of reporting of figures will be discussed.
- There were 9 re-lets, no new lets and one tenancy succession in the first quarter.
- The Homeless Protocol and Nominations Agreement between the Association and the Highland Council have been superseded by the Highland Housing Register Allocation Policy. The Council will still make Homeless Referrals to the Association but Nominations are no longer required.
- There is one Shared Ownership sale in progress which is due to complete in September 2008.

- There are two sub-lets ongoing at present.
- There was one eviction in the first quarter due to rent arrears. The tenant had abandoned the property before the eviction date. The Association will continue to pursue the former tenant for payment of the arrears.
- Housing Services staff are in the process of updating the Intranet with policies and procedures relating to the Highland Housing Register.
- A 2 bed/3 person property in Broadford is being leased to the Highland Council to assist them in providing family-type temporary accommodation for Homeless Households. In response to an enquiry from a member, the Director confirmed the Council are being charged the same rent for the property as a tenant would be charged.

Members noted the remainder of the report.

## **5. PROPERTY SERVICES**

### **(a) Property Services Report**

The Director reported on the following:

- There has been a marked increase in telephone calls to Property Services since they took over direct control of administration of day to day repairs.
- An insurance claim is being prepared following the house fire at Broadford which happened in May. In response to an enquiry from a member, the Director confirmed that the Regulator excludes this type of vacant property from the 'void' figures, and that the insurance covers the Association for loss of rent during the period of reinstatement.

Members noted the remainder of the report.

## **6. DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

### **(a) Development Services Report**

The Director reported on the following:

- It is proposed that the Association undertake a re-tendering exercise for Home Farm Phases 4 and 5. The exercise will ensure that the Association is achieving best value for the proposed works. Members unanimously approved the re-tendering exercise.

- As part of the Scottish Cabinet's visit to Skye, Stewart Maxwell, MSP is expected to visit the Association at the end of August 2008. He is particularly interested in the Biomass Heating System at Home Farm, Portree and also wishes to visit 3 tenants whose heating systems were changed to more energy efficient systems. One such tenant reports a drop in electricity consumption from £30 a week to £5 a week.
- The Association awaits the outcome of its application to the Climate Challenge Fund for funding for a feasibility study of the proposed Technical Services/Skills College in Portree.
- The Association awaits a response from The Highland Council, Inverness, who have been advised that Care & Repair grant applications are taking a minimum of three months for approval. The Association's concern is that the spend target for the year could be difficult to achieve if applications are not approved timeously.
- The Association's lender has requested a further Security be granted to them over the Association's properties at 1-16 Munro Place, Dunvegan to provide the 140% asset cover required under the term of the loan. This was approved subject to Section 66 Consent from the Scottish Government.
- In response to an enquiry from a member, the Director advised that the heating payments for Home Farm, Portree would be by means of a fob or card which would be swiped at the time of payment at the local outlet. This method is not more expensive for the tenant, but if they wished to pay by Direct Debit they could do so.
- In response to an enquiry from a member, the Director confirmed that all 24 units at Burnside, Plockton would go ahead in one phase. The typing error on page 18, which showed 14 units would be corrected. The Director confirmed that the specification of the properties had not changed but that other cost saving changes to the contract had been agreed, ie disposal of outtake materials and direct procurement of windows, heating systems etc.
- Members unanimously approved 4 heating changes in addition to those listed on the Planned Maintenance Programme. These will be funded by £49k of Grant and financial support from Scottish and Southern Energy.
- The additional attic insulation programme is progressing well.
- The Chairperson reminded Members that they can make any enquiries directly to the relevant staff members if they wish to query specific points within the reports.

Members noted the remainder of the report.

**ACTION:**

- (i) *Report to be brought to Committee following re-tendering exercise for Home Farm Phases 4 and 5.*
- (ii) *Re-tendering exercise to be undertaken in respect of Home Farm Phases 4 and 5.*
- (iii) *Typing error in Development Report 2008-2009 to be corrected to show 24 units at Burnside, Plockton.*

**7. FINANCE SERVICES**

**(a) Finance Services Report**

The Director reported on the following:

- The backlog in payment of housing benefit is causing some concern at present.
- The Association Bid Deposit will reduce during the year due to the Planned Maintenance Programme.
- Only two statutory returns remain to be submitted later this year.
- HM Revenue & Customs have processed the subsidiary company's Corporation Tax return and have confirmed that there is no tax liability for 2007/2008.

Members noted the remainder of the report.

**(b) Recovery Action**

Members noted the content of the report.

**8. HANDYPERSON SERVICES**

**(a) Handyperson Services Report**

The Director reported on the following:

- Mr D McDonald, Head of Finance for Community Care within the Highland Area, met with the Development Services Co-ordinator and the Handyperson Services Co-ordinator, and has been very complementary about how the service is run in this area.

- Representatives from the Lochaber Ward of Highland Council and NHS wish to visit to look into how the Handyperson Service operates in this area, and also to look into the running of the local Equipment Stores.
- The use of Community Service Workers continues successfully and our assistance is appreciated by the Community Service Co-ordinator.
- The Association's new member of staff will undertake Health and Safety Induction Training and a new form has been drawn up to record this.
- A member stated that a Handyperson client on the mainland had mentioned to him that they were very appreciative of the help given to them by the Handyperson.
- A total of 417 visits were carried out during the first quarter.

## **9. CORPORATE SERVICES**

### **(a) E-Business Development Report**

The Director reported on the following:

- The E-Business Development Officer has been preparing exhibition material, including a handout celebrating the Silver Jubilee of the Association.
- Work has started on a Spotlight feature to be distributed through the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations in September 2008.
- A huge increase in spam had been causing problems to various members of staff, and additional protection has been installed.

### **(b) North West Highland Community Enterprises Ltd**

No report.

### **(c) Rent Arrears – Prevention, Management and Recovery Policy & Procedures**

The Director reported on the following:

- There are no significant changes to the Policy and Procedures and they had merely been updated to reflect good practice that had come to light since the previous policy had been approved.
- In response to an enquiry from a member, the Director confirmed that tenants will be asked for their National Insurance numbers when they sign their tenancy agreements.

- Members unanimously approved the Policy & Procedures, subject to the inclusion of 'NHS agencies as appropriate' at section (iii) Recovery Action, paragraph (f).

**ACTION:**

- (i) *Rent Arrears – Prevention, Management and Recovery Policy & Procedures to be amended at section (iii) Recovery Action, paragraph (f) to include the 'NHS agencies as appropriate'.*

## **10. MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE**

### **(a) Items for Consideration and Noting**

The Director reported on the following:

- The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations Annual Conference for Board and Committee Members will take place in September. Members are asked to contact the Director if they wish to attend. Miss I Moore wishes to attend as a day delegate on the Saturday and the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson wish to attend as residential delegates.

Members noted the remainder of the report.

**ACTION:**

- (i) *Booking forms for one day delegate and two residential delegates to be submitted for the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations Annual Conference for Board and Committee Members.*

### **(b) Press Features**

- Housing related press cuttings were enclosed.

### **(c) Other Items**

None.

## **11. AOCB**

None.

There being no other competent business, the meeting closed at 8.15 pm.

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